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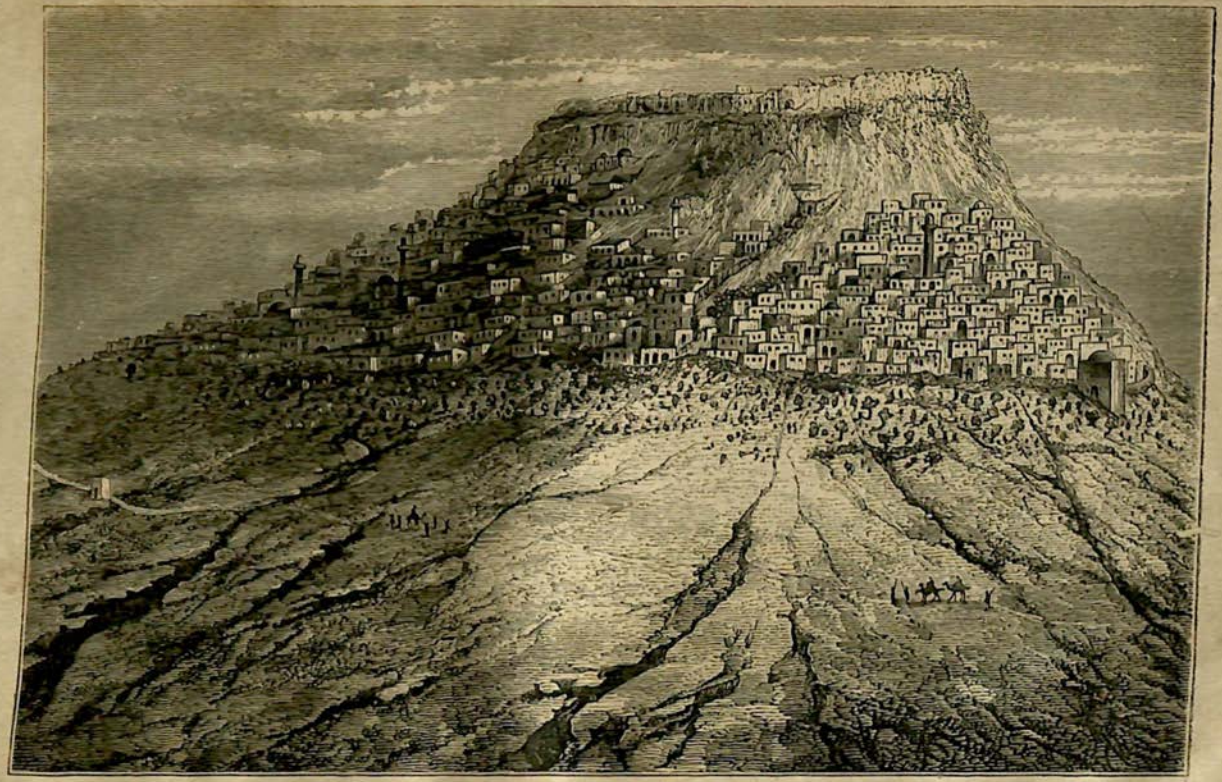

THE TOWN OF MARDIN, KURDISTAN.

THROUGH ASIATIC TURKEY.

NARRATIVE OF A JOURNEY

FROM

BOMBAY TO THE BOSPHORUS.

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BY

GRATTAN GEARY,

EDITOR OF "THE TIMES OF INDIA."

WITH A MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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At the small town of Kuffree, which is about a hundred and twenty miles north-east of Baghdad, one is out of the country of the Arabs, and enters that of the Kurds, the post route being now far from the Tigris, and skirting the Kurdish hills. The change is not at all for the better. There is a truculence about the Kurd, both in appearance and character, which makes one regret the Arab, who is generally open to reason, and will not kill without cause. Mere robbery is a trifle in these parts, and no sensible person disturbs himself

much about it. But it is different when robbery is prefaced by murder, and in Kurdistan that is held by the robbers to be the simplest and on the whole the safest mode of proceeding. Upon making the plunge, as it were, from Arabistan into Kurdistan, I almost shared the emotion which the honest dragoman, Yusef, who had never been so far north before, took some little pains to conceal, but could not wholly suppress. "The Kurds," he said, "shoot you with long guns before you can talk to them. The Arab much better!" There was no use in repining, however. He, like myself, had gone too far to go back: the distance to be traversed before getting to his home at Baghdad was too great to be accomplished on foot, and he had neither horse nor money.

I could not go back either. I had before my eyes the terrible fate of a certain member of one of the Indian Services, who had set out from Baghdad with a full determination to ride to Khiva, and who returned in two days foiled and defeated, and begged to be allowed to hide himself in the darkest recess of a friend's serdaub, so that he might escape the derision of his kind. He had not, it is true, turned his back upon Arabs or Kurds; but on other enemies from which a man of courage might turn his back without much shame. He found to his surprise that he had to sleep in stable-yards in the litter amongst the horses, and exposed to the attacks of myriads of mosquitoes and sand-flies, as well as of other enemies if possible more numerous, which, if not so noisy, were apparently under better discipline, and

delivered their assaults in silence with wonderful unanimity and effect. He gave up Khiva and glory, and retreated after having gained a point distant only thirty miles from Baghdad. When I was setting out from the city of the Caliphs, I was asked whether a dry place in a certain serdaub should be kept for me too. I answered in the negative so disdainfully that the retreat in question was no longer open to me, and so Kurds or no Kurds I must go forward, even to the bitter end. And Yusef, even if his heart failed him—which, except for a passing moment, it did not—could not retreat without me, for he had not the means of getting back. My mind being at ease on that score, I could listen with interest unmingled with anxiety to his regrets that we had not taken the route through the Shah's dominions instead of the one we were on. The post-horses, he said, were much better in Persia, and the caravanseries were "quite proper," being substantially built and supplied with compartments raised well above the ground and roofed in to keep off the heavy dew and rain. Even the rain in Persia was, he declared, of a peculiar and improved kind. It came down sometimes like pieces of white wool, and did not wet people. I asked him whether that was what was called snow, and he said that snow was what English people called it. No one saw anything like it in Baghdad, but he had been several times in Persia, and saw it often. Altogether, travelling in Persia was much better than travelling in Turkey. His opinion was, I found, shared by most Europeans who had any experience of travelling in the two countries. The caravanseries

and the post-horses of Persia are much superior, by all accounts, to those which one has to put up with in Asiatic Turkey.

These comparisons between the Turkish and Persian routes would never have troubled the dragoman's head when leaving Kuffree, but for some depressing observations which he heard at the munzil khana, while the horses were being saddled. He felt that the perils ahead were different from those with which we were familiar. The danger we know is better than the danger we do not know. We were passing out of the country of the high-minded and punctilious Arab, who robs you like a gentleman, and only cuts your throat when you ruffle his temper by a vain resistance; and we were entering the land of the Kurd, who takes your property in the spirit of a London footpad, and kills you into the bargain, to save himself trouble afterwards. It was only natural that at such a moment the Arab should seem a very good sort of fellow, and the Persian quite a civilized and superior being; but as we went on we ceased to trouble our heads with idle regrets and took the Kurd as we found him.

When we started I felt ill and feverish from the touch of the sun experienced the previous afternoon, but the pure morning air and the exercise soon set me up again, and I was troubled by neither sun nor fever for the remainder of the journey. We skirted hills of sandstone and alabaster as we proceeded, and found the country at their foot in very fair cultivation, and tolerably fertile. The cultivators were Kurds, who had very much the

air of European peasants; in comparison with the picturesque and handsome Ishmaelite they are boors, mere vulgar clodhoppers, with nothing to say for themselves; but they are, or seem to be, much more industrious and thrifty than the corresponding class of Arabs. They are fine, strong fellows, with well-marked features, which are, however, often marred by a sinister expression and a furtive glance, for which it is not easy to account in the descendants of a race of martial mountaineers who have never bowed the neck to any yoke. They have a reputation for treachery and cruelty, which, I am afraid, is not undeserved. They work in their fields with their long guns close to their hands, and regard every passer-by with a suspicion which one comes to reciprocate. My first actual contact with them was in a field of barley, which was being reaped about half way between Kuffree and Das Hormuttee. As we approached the four men who were reaping moved off to a little distance, and watched our movements with attention. A little stream ran close to the field, and we stopped to drink at it. Seeing that we were peaceably disposed the reapers returned to where they had been at work and sat down to eat their breakfast, and look at us. They had a sheep skin full of buttermilk, and they gave us several pints of that beverage without hesitation, when we approached and asked them for a little; but they shook their heads when we offered payment. This was very different from the mercenary hospitality of the sedentary Arab, who would have asked for backsheesh if we had not offered it. Later on I got accustomed to the characteristic of the

silent and somewhat surly Kurd, and I never wounded his feelings by offering backsheesh. Whenever I was thirsty I stopped and asked a Kurdish shepherd for a drink of sheep's milk, and he gave it to me as a matter of course without a thought of payment. It would have been an insult to offer him piastres for such a trifle. But it was almost impossible to get a word from one of them, or even a civil look. They have nothing of the politeness or graciousness of the Arab, who has an air of breeding and even of nobility about him, even when he is on the look out for a caravan to pillage.

As we go north the hills become higher, and the rainfall being more regular and more ample, cultivation is very general, even where irrigation is impossible. We are never long out of sight of fields, either newly ploughed or covered with corn already nearly ripe for the sickle. The thousands of acres of barley, already almost in the ear, which one sees while riding along, makes one doubt Malthus's theory that population increases faster than food can be found for it. The population is very sparse, and yet grain and sheep abound in this region. The population, such as it is, has a well-fed look, and both men and women are comfortably clad. Clothing is more substantial and more ample than amongst the fellaheen of the warmer country about Baghdad, and south of that city. The climate is healthy, and during the greater part of the year is as cool and bracing as any in the world. The raids and disturbances which distracted the country before the Sultan's authority was made real in more hilly parts of Kurdistan, had been reduced to very

small dimensions before the war with Servia, and afterwards with Russia, caused the Turkish troops to be withdrawn ; yet during the score of years of comparative tranquillity there was no apparent increase of the population. Latterly there has been a sense of general insecurity, and robbery on a large scale has been revived in some districts, but nothing has happened to bring about any considerable migration, or to reduce the numbers of the population by battle or murder. The country is underpeopled from some cause which it is not easy to specify with any confidence. There is a fine climate, a fertile soil, yielding a superabundance of food, cattle and sheep in immense numbers, property and life on the whole tolerably secure, and yet a healthy and hardy population, fairly industrious, does not increase; and there is more food in the land than mouths to eat it. The Kurd, like most people in the East, is much given to marriage, and children are numerous, as any one can see in passing through the hamlets and villages; but it may be that they are often the victims of diseases which the ignorance of their parents renders fatal. That is stated by good authorities to be the case with the children of the Arabs, and it may well be the same among the more stolid Kurds.

We reached Das Hormuttee, a good-sized town, at ten o'clock in the morning. The sun was very hot, and I was glad to find that the munzil khana was provided with a well-built arched gateway, where it was possible to get shelter while waiting for a change of horses and some zaptiehs. I was lucky enough to get some very

small, and very tough mutton chops at this place, the town being large enough to support a butcher's shop. While I was lunching the men and boys of the neighbourhood crowded round to behold an unbeliever and a Frank feeding. Being Kurds, they were not restrained by the delicacy which would have kept even Arab children at a civil distance while the operation was going on.

Luncheon over, and the crowd taking its departure, a heavy thunderstorm came on. A zaptieh, who had just come in from the next station, Thawook, stopped in the archway to keep out of the rain. He told us that he had seen two bands of Kurdish robbers on his way, one numbering ten men and the other five. If we went on he said we should be robbed by one band or the other, so he advised us to stop where we were; he also hinted that his information was of so valuable a kind that it was in his opinion worth a little backsheesh. This was a natural view for a zaptieh to take of the matter; but for the moment it raised doubts as to the absolute correctness of his story of the two bands of robbers. I sent to the mudir of Das Hormuttee to inquire whether the zaptieh had given a true report, and to ask for an escort. The mudir, Mustafa Effendi, very politely came and paid me a visit, and informed me that the road to Thawook was not safe; a number of Kurds had been seen on the look-out for travellers or caravans. He therefore suggested that I should defer my departure until three o'clock the next morning, when he would let me have ten zaptiehs. He was going to Thawook him-

self, he said, and would accompany me part of the way. I thanked him for his attention, and said that of course I would not start until daybreak the next morning. He said that the ten zaptiehs should be at the munzil khana at three in the morning, and, after cigarettes and coffee had been procured and handed round, he took his departure.

At three o'clock on the morning of the 25th of April I had already breakfasted, and the horses were saddled ready for the start. But there was no sign of the escort, and I began to doubt whether it would come until the day was far advanced. But in an hour a message came from the mudir to tell me to start, and that the escort would overtake me a mile from the town. I set out accordingly at four o'clock, and when quitting the cultivated fields around the town for the desert, up rode ten very well mounted zaptiehs, a very gallant cavalcade indeed, under the command of an officer. After military salutes had been satisfactorily exchanged, away we went in loose order and at a brisk pace. I sincerely hoped that we might come across the Kurds, so that we might see what stuff there was in their horses, for this time I should have been with the pursuers and not amongst the pursued. But the Kurds kept carefully out of sight. When we had got three or four miles out the officer in command said that we should go at a walk for a while, to give time to the mudir to come up; he had five more zaptiehs with him. The mudir came up at a gallop shortly after, and his little escort being added to the rest, we

formed quite a respectable cavalry force. Everybody chose his own pace, no particular order being observed; some cantered continuously, some galloped like lunatics for a few hundred yards and then collapsed into a walk. The mudir had done his galloping in overtaking the bulk of the party, and he, personally, was inclined to take things quietly for the remainder of the way.

We fell into conversation, and I learned that the country through which we were passing was always more or less dangerous, because it was broken by ridges and low hills, which gave facilities to small parties of robbers to lie in ambush and pounce upon passers-by when they were at a disadvantage. The mudir told us, also, that the place by the stream where we saw the Kurds reaping the previous day, and stopped and drank butter-milk out of their sheep-skin, was a very dangerous spot. Robbers often lurked behind some of the hillocks thereabouts, and rushed upon caravans that stopped to water the horses or mules. Eighteen Kurds were out in that neighbourhood, and we were very fortunate in not having fallen in with them. The week before a man was robbed of a valuable mare at that spot; but the mudir added, with an air of satisfaction, that the animal had been recovered two days later, on the Persian frontier, at a place where he thought it was likely to be found *in transitu*, and had posted zaptiehs to seize it. The owner, he said, was very pleased to get his property back, for he thought it was gone for ever. But the robbers escaped, and had not been found since.

I asked Mustafa Effendi whether the Kurds would

attack such a body as that now proceeding to Thawook? He said that they would not dare to do so. They did not want to fight troops, but to plunder. What would they get by attacking a strong armed party, even if they got the better of the fight? The horses and the government arms would be of no use to them. They could not sell them, and, if they were found in possession of the arms, no further evidence of guilt would be required. So they scarcely ever molested even a single zaptieh; they let him alone. These people had to come to the towns to make purchases or to sell things, and they could not come in if they were mounted on government horses. It was to their interest to keep quiet when zaptiehs were about, for there was no use in robbing them, and there was a risk in killing them. It was all a question of getting something in the way of plunder with the Kurdish robbers. They would rob a village if they could do it safely, but they would not otherwise. They had a different way altogether from the Arabs, and it was not easy to say which was the worse.

I remarked that the Arab, as a rule, relied upon his long spear, which entailed upon him the necessity of coming within speaking distance of his victim; but the Kurds, I understood, used matchlocks by choice, and that implied a great deal. The mudir said that it did; the Arab disliked killing any one who did not resist him; but the Kurd would just as soon kill a man as not, to prevent the possibility of resistance, and also, sometimes, with a view to prevent subsequent identification. But the Arabs were more enterprising and audacious in their

expeditions; they had better horses, and could go greater distances; it was more difficult to guard against their attacks, or to know when they were to be expected. The Kurds adopted different tactics. Their aim was to lurk in some convenient hiding-place, and when a tolerably safe opportunity presented itself they came out and attacked passers-by. If it was known that they were not in their lurking-places travellers and caravans could go on without danger, for sudden forays from a distance were very rarely attempted. But the Kurds would fire upon a small party without much hesitation if they were the stronger, and that the Arab would only do if resistance was offered. The Kurds, in the region through which we were then passing, scarcely ever came out in large bodies, as they did north and north-west of Mosul; they only came out in parties of a dozen or a score, and they very rarely attacked villages.

The thought occurred to me that one reason why they did not attack villages along the line through which I had hitherto come from Kuffree was, that there were no villages, so far as I could see, to attack. There were no clusters of habitations in the open such as I was to see later on between Mosul and Diarbekir, and onward to the Euphrates. The population seemed to be gathered into small towns, which were, of course, much beyond the strength of any score or two of wild Kurds. The account of their habits and ways when out on marauding expeditions which I had just heard, indicated plainly enough that with a properly organized police force, Kurdish robbers would find it impossible to persist

in their evil courses. They have no stomach for a fight, and would not venture with their old-world matchlocks to encounter the public force, armed with weapons of precision, and acting according to fixed rules under intelligent direction. The brigandage of Kurdistan could be stamped out more easily than that which gave so much trouble in Southern Italy, for the brigands are more faint-hearted, and less prepared to carry things to extremities.

Half way between Das Hormuttee and Thawook, the ground becoming more level, and, therefore, less favourable for ambuscades, I went forward, accompanied by three zaptiehs only, the rest following more slowly with the mudir. The object of the mudir's journey I was given to understand was to concert with the governor of Thawook measures for the dispersion of the Kurdish marauders, who were keeping the country in hot water. I arrived at Thawook at eight o'clock in the morning, and found it to be a small town built on the banks of a river, the stony bed of which was nearly half a mile wide. The water flowed through different channels in the bed of the river. During the rainy season this river comes as a vast and furious torrent from the neighbouring hills. We forded the different channels one after the other, and found the water, which came up to the saddle-flaps, icy cold, showing that it was fed by the snow on the distant mountains. The wind was from the north, and decidedly cold. The country around Thawook is a somewhat elevated plateau, and its general aspect is very different from that of the land further

south. We are entering a region where even at the end of April we feel keenly the proximity of great expanses of snow upon the Kurdish mountains, and the sun will be a welcome friend, and not an enemy to be guarded against. The haji-glouglous, or pilgrim cranes, have established themselves in great numbers at Thawook for the summer season; their enormous nests, each consisting of a cartload of dry sticks, are on every roof and wall. They remain in their summer quarters for five months, and then proceed on their annual pilgrimage to Mecca, taking their newly-fledged offspring with them.

CHAPTER II.

KERKOOK AND ARBELA.

Kerkook—Large fortified town—Petroleum and naphtha springs—Petroleum used in the steamers superseded by English coal—The Russians use it on the Caspian—The springs at Hit—Inexhaustible supply—How utilized—Fall of manna at Kerkook—Flights of quails—The Jews—Tomb of Daniel—An enlightened Pasha—Undisciplined zaptiehs—Route northward from Kerkook—Hard fare—Bad horses—Conscripts handcuffed—The Golden Bridge—Busy town—Rafts for transport of grain—Kurdish weapons—A suspicious caravan—Arbela—Perils of the approach at nightfall—A private house—Lost Tribes—Jews and Nestorians.

We stayed at Thawook until four o'clock in the afternoon, and started then for the considerable town of Kerkook, which is distant about thirty miles. We arrived at that important place at eight o'clock in the evening, and went straight to the khan, a curious-looking building of two stories. There is a wide river, or rather river-bed here, similar to that at Thawook, and it is spanned by a long bridge. The town is fortified: a citadel on a low round hill lies a little apart. The streets are very narrow, and even more tortuous than those of the other towns in this country; they are also more dirty and evil smelling. The country around is very

fertile, and is carefully irrigated and turned to good agricultural account. But in the rainy season the river overflows its banks, and the plain is converted into a morass.

The numerous petroleum and naphtha springs in the neighbourhood give Kerkook its chief celebrity, and furnish employment for many of its people. The most abundant supply is procured from the hills around, but a good deal is collected on the surface of the water in the ditches and stagnant pools. When refined it is exported to Baghdad, which city is lighted with petroleum. In a state more or less crude it has been successfully used as fuel on board the Turkish steamers plying on the Tigris; but latterly English coal has superseded it for this purpose, being cheaper and more effective. Probably owing to the wasteful and unscientific methods employed in its collection and preparation, and afterwards in its consumption in the furnaces of the steamers, its cost has been found to be equivalent to six pounds a ton, while English coal can be delivered at Bussorah by the many steamers now employed in the Gulf trade, at two pounds a ton. This has been a heavy blow and great discouragement to the petroleum interest at Kerkook. If European science were brought to bear upon the matter, it is very possible that the inexhaustible supply of petroleum existing here and at Hit, on the Euphrates, would become of great commercial importance. The Russians have turned the petroleum springs within their territories, on the shores of the Caspian, to very considerable profit. All their steamers

on that sea use petroleum for fuel, finding it cheaper than wood. The Turks do not refine their petroleum properly, and it has a very disagreeable smell when burning, consequently the American petroleum is gradually superseding the native article in private houses in Baghdad and Bussorah.

There is no limit to the supply which might be easily procured from Kerkoǫk, and certain hills nearer to Baghdad, and from Hit. The hills between Kerkook and Arbela have been yielding bitumen and petroleum since the time of Alexander the Great, in whose honour a great illumination was made in the latter town on the evening of the day after that of the battle which made him master of the Persian Empire.

The springs of Hit were visited by Alexander, and some centuries later by the Emperor Trajan; they still yield great quantities of bitumen. Petroleum abounds in the hollows of the hills, and issues from the surface. But while the petroleum springs from almost every hollow in these hills, it does not appear in any abundance in the surrounding plains, therein differing but little from the petroleum springs of Kerkook. It is very greasy to the touch; and if handled, and pressure be used, it sticks like pitch. As it rises from the earth it is of a brownish colour, with a greenish tinge, and is semi-transparent; it quickly becomes opaque and hard, in which state it is easily broken, with a shining, resinous fracture. It is lighter than water, and very soon inflames. The natives of Hit use it for fuel to burn limestone, the lime being sent to Baghdad; and also to

cover boats, and preserve wood from decay, as well as to render impervious the irrigating channels from the margin of the river to the patches of cultivation close by. The boats, which are protected with this substance, look as if they were covered with a thick hide.

The principal spring is in a funnel-shaped hollow on a hill, which is ten or twelve yards in diameter. The hollow is filled with a dark, blackish-brown substance, from the centre of which salt water bubbles up, and floating off, escapes to some salt ponds, where, evaporating, its saline matter is left behind. Sometimes the water rises at intervals from the centre in jets a foot and a half high, and, at others, it bursts out in considerable volume, raising the petroleum into huge bubbles, which burst, and let the imprisoned water out with a gurgling noise. The pit is very deep in the centre, but its shallowness at the edges permits the people to stand in it up to their knees, while they with facility roll up the tenacious substance into masses, which are carried away, and placed to dry in the heat of the sun. When hardened, it is used chiefly for fuel for the burning of limestone. The flames give a strong light and heat, and it leaves a small earthy residue after it is burnt. Notwithstanding the quantity that is continuously drawn off, the petroleum always continues at the same level; and the Hittites say that the supply in the pit is inexhaustible. The fluid skimmed off the water in the ditches and marshy places in the neighbourhood of Kerkook is of a blackish-green colour, and smells abominably. A good chemist, with capital and enterprise

enough to set up refining works on a large scale at Kerkook, or at Hit, ought to make a fortune in a few years. There is a large market for petroleum in Baghdad, and the other cities; exportation, on a large scale, would not be difficult, for there is water-carriage the whole way from Hit, and nearly the whole way from Kerkook to the sea.

Besides its petroleum springs Kerkook is blessed with an abundance of manna, which descends with the dew at certain seasons, and covers the fields and trees. It is somewhat granular in substance, and in colour is of a yellowish white. When collected in the early morning it is hard to the touch; it is put in jars, and exposed to the rays of the sun, when it melts and forms a substance not unlike cheese in appearance and consistency. In taste it is sweet like honey. Manna also falls at times in the neighbourhood of Baghdad, and I tasted it there. I cannot say that I should like to have to live on it alone, as the children of Israel had to do, but it seemed to be nutritious and was by no means unpalatable. The manna which falls still farther to the south, in the great Arabian desert, is said to be better than that which is found near Baghdad and at Kerkook. I was told that manna sometimes descends upon the country around Mosul, but not in any great quantities.

Great flights of quails come to Kerkook in the beginning of the winter, and the birds, being for the most part young and unable to fly well, are easily caught, and they form a valuable addition to the food supply of the Kerkookians. They are very good to eat when young,

but as they grow old they become tough and flavourless. These useful birds are well known in the south also, and at times they almost darken the air, so great are their numbers. In the desert through which the Jews wandered for so many weary years manna and quails must have furnished the chosen people with very sufficient nourishment. But when we blame the Israelites for clamouring for the flesh-pots of Egypt, we should ask ourselves whether we are quite certain that we would have been more resigned in their place to the monotony of the diet. Self-denial in such matters is not the characteristic of these later times.

The Jewish community at Kerkook is numerous and well-to-do. Near the front of the hill, on which the citadel stands, is a building which contains four tombs, one of which is generally believed by Jews and Mussulmans alike to be that of the prophet Daniel; the other three are said to be the last resting-places of three pious men, Hanania, Azariah, and Mishael, the companions of Daniel, who were cast by Nebuchadnezzar into the fiery furnace, but came out unscathed. The possession of these tombs gives the Jews of the town a certain status and influence, for the shrines are regarded as very holy, and are visited from far and near by devotees wishing to be healed miraculously of all kinds of diseases, and even by men of business anxious to secure supernatural aid in the conduct of difficult or hazardous affairs. I had not time to visit the tombs, but I was told that they are apparently of great antiquity, and that there are inscriptions which no one can read on those of the prophet

Daniel's companions, but that his own is quite plain. The tradition that the tomb of Daniel is at Kerkook is very old, and is, I believe, regarded by enlightened Jews as of good authority. There is, indeed, another tradition that Daniel was buried in the bed of a river in Susiana, the river being turned from its course while the grave was being made, but that is a mere legend, having nothing to recommend it to general credence amongst either Jews or Gentiles.

I heard afterwards that the Governor of Kerkook was a very enlightened Pasha, quite European in tastes and habits, and blessed with an English wife, the sole occupant of his heart and harem. His children, though young, speak French and English. European visitors, I was informed when it was too late to profit by the information, were always welcome at the Governor's konak, and if I had called I should have had a very agreeable time in Kerkook.

The Kurds being as troublesome to the north of Kerkook as they were to the south of it, I sent to the Pasha to ask for an escort, and he directed that six zaptiehs should accompany me; but after waiting two hours, only three presented themselves. The horses supplied us by the post contractor were miserable animals; but our remonstrances were unavailing, for we were told that the post had passed through, and all the good horses were gone. We set out, and after going five or six miles, one of the horses fell dead lame, and could go no further. We had, therefore, to return to Kerkook and get another, which was scarcely an improvement. I en-

deavoured to bribe one of the zaptiehs to change horses with me, but he refused, apparently fearing to provoke the jealousy or ill-natured remarks of his companions. These zaptiehs were not uniformed, and had, apparently, never been drilled or disciplined. They were badly armed with old-fashioned worn-out carbines, and compared very badly indeed with the smart soldier-like zaptiehs of the Baghdad district.

Soon after leaving the town, the route took us among ranges of hills, some five or six hundred feet high. One of the hills that we skirted was overflowing with bitumen, which came down its sides in thick filthy-looking streams, giving out an uncomfortable odour. There were some shallow reservoirs where the bitumen was collected and prepared for market, but no men were at work when we rode past. The zaptiehs said the hill was the property of the Government, and that the petroleum got from it was sent to Baghdad to be used on board the steamboats. We were now continually ascending the slopes of hills, and in the course of two hours came to a pass overlooking a rolling upland plain, apparently very fertile and in good cultivation. Tracts covered with waving crops of ripening barley alternated with rich meadows, the abundant grass of which was sprinkled all over with buttercups and daisies. The heat of the sun was tempered by a cold north wind. The Kurdish mountains towards the north-east were now in full view: sombre masses with snow in the gorges. Their proximity manifestly had a considerable influence on the climate; although the sun was shining

with unclouded majesty in a clear sky, the air was cool and bracing, exhilarating the spirits and so stimulating the appetite, that even hard-boiled eggs were in demand. I had consumed so many of these useful but flavourless articles of diet, that nothing but mountain air could make them eatable; they grow very monotonous after the second dozen; but on this journey they are indispensable, being often the only food procurable at the munzil khanas, always excepting, of course, the hard unleavened bread of the untutored Arab. But though the scenery was very fine, the air bracing, the appetite good, and the supply of hard-boiled eggs ample, I could not consider myself happy. The wretched horses were so tired that they stumbled at every step, and sometimes seemed inclined to stop altogether. I called the surajee's attention to this state of things and threatened to make a report to the authorities. He was quite equal to the occasion, and said we had come at such a pace that the horses were quite knocked up. I thought this was a joke at first, but presently he induced one of the zaptiehs to remonstrate with me for not walking. I was trying to keep the horse at a slow canter, and he coolly said that at the rate I was going I would kill *his* horse. As he was astride of a fine bouncing Arab, eager for a run, I thought this rather too impudent, and I told him that he was there to escort me, and not to give me orders; if he had not a horse fit for duty and able to keep up with me, he might go back, and I would report him to the Pasha. This silenced him, and he went ahead at a gallop, to show what his horse could do.

As we were going along, we overtook several groups of conscripts, handcuffed like prisoners, on their way to join their regiments. They were carefully guarded, but were on very friendly terms with their guardians, all soldiers of the line. Some of them were singing and seemed to be happy enough, in spite of the large and cumbersome wooden handcuffs which they had to wear; others were footsore and depressed. The conscripts who were singing were young fellows of seventeen or eighteen; the others were middle-aged men, doubtless fathers of families, and were downcast at leaving those dependent on them unprovided for. Most of the groups were composed of Kurds, many of whom were much belied by their looks, if they were not robbers and cut-throats by profession. They were in complexion rather fair than dark; some had red curly hair, and might pass for Germans; few of them were as dark as the inhabitants of the south of Europe.

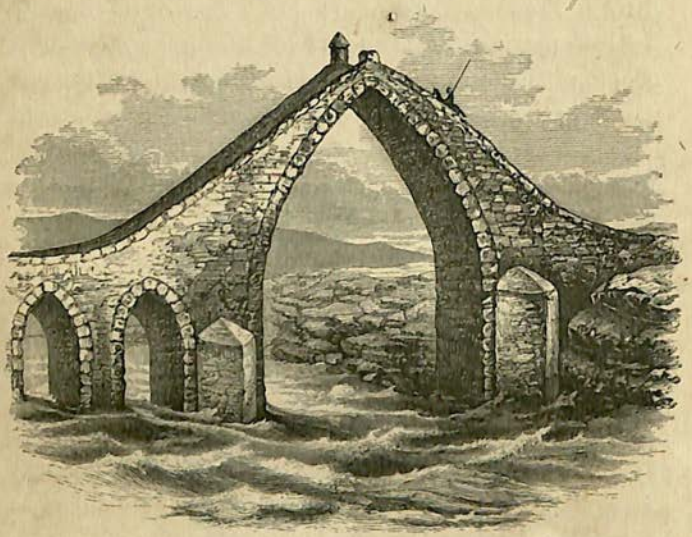
We arrived at Alton Kupree—the Golden Bridge—at noon, having been five hours getting over rather less than thirty miles. The moment we arrived the surajee complained, bitterly, to the people around that I had ridden the whole way from Kerkook at the gallop, and completely tired out the horses. The dragoman lost his temper at this, and there was a fearful row, which lasted fully ten minutes. But the surajee's object was gained —he raised a doubt in people's minds as to the real cause of the woe-begone look of the horses he had in charge.

Alton Kupree is a town of considerable size and im-

portance, and being situated on the Zab, which is navigable for rafts to the Tigris, it carries on a considerable trade with Baghdad. The Golden Bridge which crosses the river Zab is a very remarkable-looking structure, and gives the town its name. It is built of red brick, with limestone buttresses, and is of a most preposterous height, the gradient resembling that of a high pitched roof of the good old kind. It is very ticklish work riding up one side of this bridge, the horse slipping backwards at every step over the well-worn stone pavement; but it is still more hazardous to slide down at the other side, which is equally steep and quite as slippery. The rascally surajee asked me to dismount and walk up the bridge; but I was not in a mood to attend to any request he had to make, and besides, I wished to see whether a horse could be ridden over such a wonderful bridge. So I accomplished the feat, though very slowly, the horse picking his way cautiously and putting his feet in the irregularities of the pavement, of which, of course, there were a good many. Pavements are never renewed in Turkey; once put down they remain for ever, if they do not wear out;—if they do, that is nobody's business.

At the northern end of the bridge is a large gateway, part of the spacious bridge-house, occupied by the men employed by the lessee of the bridge to collect the toll for every animal crossing. There are two bridges, for the Zab divides, and its branches go round the island on which the town is built; there is a bridge over each branch, and the same lessee rents both, paying to the

Government 60,000 beshlecks—rather less than 3000*l.*—yearly for them. The traffic is so considerable that the laden mules and horses recoup him, and leave him a handsome profit. We were not charged any toll, being "government people," that is, proceeding by the government-post, with an escort. The munzil khana being only a stable-yard, I was accommodated with a



ALTON KUPREE—THE GOLDEN BRIDGE.

carpet and a cushion, in the gateway, and sat there to eat a luncheon of kababs—pieces of meat cooked on little wooden skewers held over the fire—and fresh spring onions. As usual in these ill-mannered Kurdish districts, all the loose population of the town crowded round to see the Frank eating. Luncheon over, I went

to have a side view of the wonderful bridge over which we had clambered; and I made the sketch of it which is reproduced on the opposite page.

I had the satisfaction of finding that the sketch was regarded as correct and creditable by all the inhabitants who could secure a convenient position for leaning over my shoulder, and viewing my artistic labours. The banks of the river are very rocky and rugged at the bridge; they rise some twenty feet above the surface of the river, and the crown of the arch is as high above the banks as the banks are above the water. A man crossing the bridge made forty-two paces while going over the centre arch. The Sultan Murad, who recovered Baghdad from the Persians in the year 1638, caused it to be built.

The bridge over the other branch of the river is different in style, but equally curious. Two fine Roman arches carry it a good way across the river, when it turns off at right angles and reaches the opposite shore over a third arch, which seems to have set up in business on its own account, and to have no connexion with the other two. The ascent at both ends is as usual very steep, but once on it you find it to be as level as Waterloo Bridge. It is built of stone, not of brick, like the Bridge of Gold.

I went round the town, and found it a busy, thriving little place, and very well built of stone and brick. The bridge farmer said the population was over six thousand. At one spot, where the river formed a little bay, thirty kellaks, or rafts, were being constructed, to carry grain

to Baghdad. They would take five days floating down, and carry about eighty tons of grain each. One of the kellaks rested on a broad foundation of one hundred and forty-four skins, carefully sewn up, so as to keep inflated with air. The skins give immense floating power; those of the unloaded kellaks merely rested on the water, and men kept constantly ladling, or rather shovelling, water over them, to keep them from drying and cracking in the sun's rays. The skins cost about a shilling apiece. Bundles of reeds are placed over them, and when the reeds and branches of trees are laid over the reeds, and all made fast together with coarse cheap ropes, the raft is ready for its cargo. The timber and the skins are as marketable as the grain at Baghdad, so that nothing is wasted. When travellers are going down the river, they pay for a space on one of these rafts, and on it erect a little wooden house in which they live and sleep. Cooking is carried on, a fire being made at a convenient corner of the raft. It requires considerable address to keep the raft—which is generally some thirty feet by forty feet over all—right in the middle of the current; if it is allowed to drift near the banks it may ground, and two or three of the skins are sure to burst. When this happens too often, the voyage necessarily comes to an end until the cargo is landed, and the burst skins stitched up and again inflated. Gliding down the Tigris on a raft is, I am told by Europeans who have made the journey, the smoothest and pleasantest travelling known; the motion is scarcely felt, and one can contemplate the changing scenery, or write as one

chooses in the most unruffled composure. It is a great pity that one cannot go *up* the Tigris on one of these rafts; few, I fancy, would then ride post from Baghdad to Mosul!

While I was looking at the preparation of the fleet of thirty rafts, a young man came up, and very politely handed me a bunch of beautiful roses tied around the end of a stout reed, half an inch thick. I noticed that roses thus made into a bouquet were in the hands of many of the less busy inhabitants. This was the second floral offering with which I was honoured, by a perfect stranger in the street while on my journey. The first was at Hillah, on the Euphrates, where a Jew handed me a bunch of roses. It is a very graceful way of expressing good will, or scraping an acquaintance. No backsheesh, so far as I could perceive, was expected or desired by the donors.

At half-past three in the afternoon everything was ready for a fresh start, and I set out for Ervil—the Arbela immortalized by Alexander's crowning victory. The character of the country remained the same as that on the other side of the Lesser Zab—rolling downs, whereon thousands of acres of barley and other cereals alternated with vast tracts of rich grazing-lands. Every Kurdish cultivator we saw had a long gun with two prongs, like a pitchfork, fastened to the middle of the barrel. When the gun is in use the prongs are stuck in the ground, and supply a rest; when it is being carried on the shoulder the prongs, working on a kind of hinge, fold up, and project on either side of the barrel

like very vicious-looking bayonets. As we came along, one group of Kurds took us for robbers, and ran on one side, leaving the laden mules they were driving in the middle of the track, while they took up a position from which they could command us if we began to plunder. This party had English muskets, and could have given us a great deal of trouble if we had meddled with the mules; but we made a circuit to the other side, looking as innocent as we could, and we escaped being fired upon. There was not a tree or a bush to be seen over the whole face of the country, and it says a good deal for the emerald tints which refreshed the eye wherever it turned, that they were scarcely missed.

One of the zaptiehs who formed my little escort rode a small white Cossack horse, which was the prize of his bow and spear in battle. He had been through the Armenian campaign, and was present at the fighting before Bayazid, at Kars, and near Erzeroum. The Cossack who formerly owned the horse fell off in action, a bullet having killed him; the animal ran away terrified, and the Turk laid hold of it as it galloped past him. He was himself wounded in the leg soon after, but he got cured, and he had the horse to the good. It was a marvellously ugly, bony little animal, with a curious shuffling trot, but it was very hardy, and never got tired. None of the horses of the country in the least resembled it; the Cossack breed, if this was a fair specimen, as the zaptieh said it was, is quite distinct from that of the Kurds, and I need not say it has nothing in common with the symmetrical Arab.

As night began to fall, the zaptiehs became fidgety about the Kurds, and they asked whether I had my revolver loaded. I told them that it was ready for instant service, and that it did not constitute my only armament; I had my little Derringer also loaded and ready. "That was right," they said; "the Kurds here are bad men; they not only rob, but kill people." I inquired whether they were as bad as the Arabs; and was told that they were a great deal worse, for the Arab would be satisfied if he got plenty of backsheesh, and you treated him well. This information had just been gratefully received when we saw a dark mass a little way in front of us and heard a great commotion. We got out our arms and prepared for action, challenging the enemy, and asking him to give an account of himself. The reply was "Caravan! caravan!" and a demand for us to declare ourselves. We sang out, "Postea! postea!" We found that we had greatly alarmed the caravan, which was a tolerably large one, with about eighty or a hundred mules, some of them laden with timber for Alton Kupree or Kerkook. The men had got ready their guns, and formed for action about forty yards to the right of the laden mules. I saw afterwards that this manœuvre was almost invariably resorted to; the men never remained close to the animals or goods they thought endangered; they took up a position at some distance, and covered the supposed foe with their guns. In travelling at night in the Kurd country, it is very necessary indeed to keep wide awake, so that at the first challenge you can answer, and reassure those you come

suddenly upon: the least delay may bring a volley upon you, and in the darkness some demon may guide a bullet where bad markmanship might never succeed in sending it in daylight. Refusal to answer a challenge is so invariable with robbers, that naturally a delay in answering is regarded as a very bad sign, justifying the instant discharge of all available arms in the direction of the indiscreetly silent. I have often wondered why robbers, generally devoid of scruples, should hesitate to give a reassuring answer when challenged, and thus throw their victims off their guard. But I am told they never resort to so dishonourable a ruse. They would probably think it unprofessional, just as London burglars consider the opening of safes by other than the well-known professional devices "illegal," and quite beneath an artist's skill. There is honour amongst thieves.

At ten o'clock we saw the black mass of the castle and town of Arbela rising up before us in the darkness, as Darius must have seen it when flying from the field of Guagamala, where the irresistible Macedonian had shattered his sceptre, and struck the crown from his head. The great battle which changed the destinies of the eastern world was fought, not at Arbela, from which it took its name, but at a ford over the Zab, near the village of Guagamala, some hours' distance to the north-east. Darius rode into the strong town of Arbela when the day was lost, and passed the night there, setting out again in his flight the next morning. The day after the battle Alexander came to the town, which surrendered to him, and the inhabitants in the evening improvised

an illumination of naphtha, or petroleum, in his honour. They cannot be blamed for wishing to propitiate the great conquerer, but it is to be wished that their descendants would turn some of the abundant naphtha supply of the locality to account for the comfort of peaceful visitors to Arbela, who arrive after sundown. The night when I reached the town was intensely dark, and the track lay along the edge of a canal or watercourse. The bank in one place had fallen in several weeks before, and was not repaired, although one or two belated travellers had rolled into the water, horses and all, and been drowned. The zaptiehs, fortunately, remembered that this pitfall was in existence, and we went on cautiously, but even our circumspection hardly sufficed to save one of the party; his horse, slipping at the edge of the water, which was now right across the pathway, very nearly rolled in. I asked the zaptiehs why a barrier was not put up to guard against such accidents, and they, as usual, put their reply in the form of another question: "How can people who are going on a journey stop to do that? If they don't fall in, they go on their way."

As we came near the town our approach appeared to alarm the occupants of an outlying house, and a gun was fired out of a window, not exactly at us, but more or less in our direction. We continued our march along pathways through fields intersected with ditches, and at length came to the front of a scarped hill, on which the citadel stood, grim and massive in the starless night. A deep moat, filled with fetid water smelling like a sewer, wound round the base of the hill, and along its

malodorous edge we picked our way, until at length we turned into a narrow and filthy lane. I asked where was the munzil khana, and was informed that it was altogether too dirty a place for me to go to, and therefore they had brought me to a private house, where I could stop until morning. To enter this "private house" I had to stoop low to pass through a doorway four feet high, and then, having crossed a little courtyard, about eight feet square, and ancle deep in filth and mud, I had to stoop once more to get into a place which the owner, if not a Mussulman, would have used as a pig-sty. He, good man, used it as a receptacle for the broken accoutrements of baggage-mules, and odds-and-ends generally. It smelt so abominably that I came out, and said that I would prefer to sleep until daylight on the mud of the courtyard rather than in the "private house." This, however, proved to be impracticable; the mud was too deep and too soft. I asked whether the roof of the house was not available, but it was, unfortunately, a lean-to, not a flat roof. Was there no better place to be had? No, none whatever; the whole town was now in bed and asleep, and better accommodation was not to be procured anywhere. I thought of poor Darius, and wondered whether he found better quarters the night he unexpectedly put up at Arbela. There was nothing for it but to sleep as well as one could on the earthen floor of the damp and fetid hovel, and trust to Providence to escape the twin perils of rheumatism and ague until the sun rose. I therefore begged for the favour of a fire of straw and sticks, which, lighted on the floor, fumi-

gated the place, and dissipated some, at least, of the heavy and reeking air which rendered the place so unendurable. In about half an hour, the house warming and fumigation being over, I went inside, and dined off cold boiled eggs and the coarse bread of the country; and having dined, I slept, and slept well.

Arbela is not unlike Kerkook in its general aspect, the greater part of the town being built on an open plain, and the citadel occupying nearly the whole of a circular hill, rising somewhat abruptly from the plain. The population speaks Arabic, and is some twelve thousand in number; that of Kerkook being about twenty thousand. There are a great many Jews in Arbela, as well as in Kerkook; but having no Daniel's tomb to give them consideration in the eyes of the Mussulmans, they were formerly very much oppressed. Of late, however, they have no special cause of complaint, the Government protecting them against the bigotry of their Kurdish fellow-citizens; but the last generation had often very bitter tribulation as its portion. An eminent rabbi, named Perrachia, an Austrian subject, having died while passing through Arbela, his co-religionists buried him with some pomp, and thus gave offence to the Mussulmans, who, in the night, tore his body from the grave, cut off a hand, and then flung the mutilated remains in an open ditch. The Jews of the town were so cowed that they feared to make any complaint; but the Jews of Baghdad intervened, and the guilty were brought before the Pasha, who thus addressed them :—

"Do you not know that graves are prisons in which God preserves His people until the day of judgment? Why do you not respect what belongs to God?"

The Jews of Arbela were satisfied with the moral effect of this quaint remonstrance, and begged that their persecutors might be let off; and their request was granted. But such incidents are unknown in these later times; the Jews are now very fairly protected by the Turkish authorities, and the Kurds, their great tyrants, have been taught to leave them in peace. The enforcement of the Sultan's authority in the mountainous districts of Kurdistan, to the north-east of Arbela, has relieved the Jews dwelling there from cruel oppression at the hands of their Kurdish neighbours. The popular tradition is that the Jews in those parts are descended from the tribes of Zebulon and Napthali, which were transplanted thither from the land of Israel by the Assyrian king, Tiglath Pileser. The Nestorian Christians, dwelling in those mountains, are said to be of the same race, and to have still many things in common with the Jews, while they have nothing in common with the Kurds, who look upon both as one people, and ill-treat and rob both alike when circumstances permit. The Nestorians themselves have a tradition that their ancestors were Jews who were settled in the mountains from a time antecedent to the destruction of the first Temple. There is nothing at all improbable in this tradition. There were many considerations which might have induced the Assyrian monarch to settle the abducted tribes in the Kurdish mountains to the north-east of

the empire. In that remote region all communication with their own country and co-religionists would be out of the question, and they would naturally be at enmity with the mountaineers around, who were most probably as wild and intractable then as they have been ever since, and as much in need of a strong curb. At the present day the existence of a numerous body of Jews and Christians in the Kurdish country might easily be turned to practical account by the Turks in bringing the Kurds to reason, and forcing them to submit to the restraints of civilization.

CHAPTER III.

"ARISE, GO UNTO NINEVEH, THAT GREAT CITY."
Jonah iii. 2.

View of the Persian mountains—Invigorating climate—Tomb of Mary—The Greater Zab—Difficulty of crossing it—A deserted village—Search for the villagers—A Turkish officer—The route to Lake Van—Impression created by the Russian successes—On to Nineveh—The walls and mounds—View of Mosul—Koyunjik—The tomb of Jonah—A bridge over dry land—Crossing the Tigris—An unexpected greeting—The excavations at Nineveh—Mr. Rassam—New method of excavating—Specimens of a lost art—The Isdubar legends—Valuable record—Fate of two winged-bulls—Ride along the ancient walls—Nimroud—The book of Jonah—Discoveries at Balawat—Record of a great campaign.

ON the morning of the 27th April, I left Arbela for a village on the Greater Zab, from which point I could reach Mosul, on the other side of the Tigris, by the evening, crossing the site of Nineveh on the way.

Along this part of the route the traveller has always in view the magnificent spectacle of the great Persian mountains, ridge after ridge and peak beyond peak covered with dazzling snow. The mountains are so sharp and distinct in the wonderfully pure air, that they seem to be within twenty or thirty miles of the track, but some of the most prominent in height and shape are forty hours off. The climate now becomes very un-

mistakably influenced by the near neighbourhood of these vast ranges of snow-clad mountains. The wind is cold and raw even when the sun's rays are unpleasantly hot. This, however, only holds good when it comes from the north or north-east. With a southerly wind one may faint with heat in full view of snow enough to furnish forth a Russian winter.

As we cantered over the yielding grass in the fresh morning I was fully indemnified for my unpleasant experiences in the private house in Arbela the night before. Clover and wild thyme gave out a delicious fragrance; and flowers, yellow and white and blue and red, sparkled with dew-drops. The keen mountain air, laden as it seemed with the very smell of the snow which glistened in the early sun on the peaks and ranges from which it came, quickened the blood, and gave a new power of enjoyment to every sense. The fact that the first stage of a journey, which I had been told was at this time particularly hazardous, had been so far successfully accomplished, and that the evening would bring repose and entire security at Mosul, may have had something to do with this pleasant feeling of elation, but the external circumstances were in themselves, I think, sufficient to account for it.

At a distance of about two miles north of Arbela we saw, standing on the grassy plain close to the caravan track, a plain structure in limestone, about twenty feet high, and some twenty-five in width and breadth, which one of the zaptiehs said was the tomb of Mary, to which Christians come every year from the country round

about, and even from great distances. I inquired what Mary lay in the tomb, and was answered, "Mary of the Christians, the mother of Jesus." I found afterwards that the Christians of Mosul think this is indeed her tomb, and regard it with great honour. No emblem or inscription was noticeable on the structure, which has no architectural pretensions of any kind.

The Zab is seven hours, say twenty-one miles from Arbela, and nine hours, or twenty-eight miles, from Mosul. At the point where it has to be crossed, we found it a furious torrent, broad as the Seine at Paris, but just then very shallow in the deep bed between its high banks. Unlike the Lesser Zab at Alton Kupree, no bridge spans it, its impetuosity apparently intimidating the engineers. The difficulty of crossing it is at all times very great, and when it is swollen by the winter rains or by the melting of the snow in summer, is almost insuperable. Caravans have sometimes to encamp for days and even weeks on the banks until the waters subside and the passage can be made in safety. Last winter a Turkish regiment, in crossing this river at night, *en route* for the seat of war in Armenia, lost forty men and a great number of rifles. The colonel was brought to a court-martial; but he was acquitted of anything worse than an error of judgment in risking the passage after dark; his excuse being the necessity of arriving at his destination with as little loss of time as possible. The troops sent from Baghdad to Armenia had all to march over the country which I traversed. They took a fortnight to accomplish the distance to Mosul, and

suffered considerably from the want of proper arrangements for their convenience and comfort on the way. How inestimable a railway would have been in that emergency! The men of the Baghdad contingent could have been conveyed the whole distance in fifteen hours, and arrived at Mosul in full health and strength, ready for the arduous march of four hundred miles still between them and the Muscovite invaders of Armenia.

We had to wait at the Zab for some time until a large flat-bottomed boat or barge was brought from the northern bank to ferry over our horses. The operation was very difficult. The barge was rowed up-stream for half a mile by the main strength of half-a-dozen men, and then launched on the current, the men jumping in and with long poles shoving it athwart the stream as it swept down. It struck the opposite bank nearly three quarters of a mile from the point where it started, and then the horses were forced to leap into it. When all was ready, we were shoved up the stream for a good way, and then the barge was once more sent out into the river, and after a rapid voyage obliquely across the foaming torrent, we found ourselves close to the northern shore. The men called out to us to hold fast, which we did; but the shock of striking the bank took us off our feet and threw the horses violently one against the other, to their great alarm. We then landed and remounted, having passed with safety the most formidable river intersecting the route from Baghdad to Mosul. The Zab forms the southern boundary of the Pashalik of Mosul. It is said to be full of fish, one kind of which

attains the respectable weight of two hundred pounds, and is regarded by the natives as a delicacy.

We found the large Kurdish village, or rather town, on the river banks just where we crossed, quite deserted, not a single inhabitant, not even a dog being anywhere visible. The place was somewhat substantially built, chiefly of sun-dried brick, and, although deserted, was by no means dilapidated, or falling to decay. The inhabitants had simply migrated to a neighbouring plateau, where they had set up a village of black goat's hair or other coarse material, in which they will dwell for a season; and thence migrating once more as the summer advances, will enjoy change of air and free tent life, while their flocks and herds find fresh fields and pastures new. At the return of winter, they will all be back in their houses of sun-dried brick, which will keep out the bitter wind from the neighbouring snow-capt mountains. I found this to be invariably the case with the Kurdish inhabitants of the Pashalík of Mosul. The villagers always live in the winter in substantially-built mud houses, well placed and well roofed. These they completely abandon in spring, and live in tents, sometimes in the immediate neighbourhood. All the large Kurdish villages I passed were in absolute solitude; the villagers could generally be found with their flocks and all their household goods over the next ridge of grass-land. When the winter, which is very severe in these parts, sets in, they return to their permanent habitations and remain in them until the ensuing spring.

We went in quest of the absent owners of the little

town on the banks of the Zab, and in half an hour came upon them on the slope of a small hill considerably above the level of the river-banks. The head-man received me very civilly, and made me sit on his best carpet, under the shade of the end of his tent, which was kept up by two poles, and formed a sort of portico where all the elders of the village sat in conclave. One of them, who had just returned from a journey to Mosul, told me that it was said there in the bazaar that the English and Russians were fighting. A fine, soldier-like man, of middle age, upon this asked me whether the English could fight Russia? I said that the English had done so before, and that the Russians were beaten. But, said the querist, the other Franks helped the English then; could they beat the Russians if they had to fight it out for themselves? It was evident that this question was put by a man of more experience and judgment than the usual run of politicians in Kurdish tents, and I found that he was a Turk who had come down from Lake Van, and was able to report the passes open, the snow no longer blocking them. He seemed to be a subaltern, but his uniform was by no means in good order, and he wore over whatever remained of it a Kurdish felt coat, the felt being at least half an inch thick. He said that the soldiers were beginning to return from the seat of war. I asked him whether the road to Lake Van would be practicable for me. But he said that it was not safe; many of the returning soldiers were not under their officers, and they would be dangerous to travellers, for they were starving, and if

they got an opportunity they would rob to support themselves. The whole country, he declared, was in a state of trouble and confusion; and the villages had been so completely cleaned out, that there was no food to be got in them. How, then, could a traveller live? My best course was to go from Mosul to Diarbekir; the villages on that route were right enough, and there was no difficulty.

Then, reverting to the important question of the comparative strength of the English and Russians, the officer asked me what was the strength of the English army? To this query I replied that England and India could put two hundred thousand men in the field before the war had gone on very long, and, that as time allowed, the number could be indefinitely increased, for England had inexhaustible resources, both in men and money. "Two hundred thousand men," said this unbelieving Turk, "would, perhaps, be sufficient; but what kind of troops are they? Are they all Nizams—regulars; or, are they partly Redifs—reserves?" This conversation showed as clearly as very many others that the Turkish mind has come to entertain doubts as to the power of England to fight Russia single-handed. The final defeat of the armies of the Sultan, at the close of the late war, was so decisive and overwhelming, that the Oriental imagination conceives the Russian Empire to be almost, if not quite irresistible. We know that there is no real ground for this belief; but the fact that it is taking root in the East must not be left out of account in estimating the results of the late war.

After a long and friendly chat, and a meal of bread and onions, washed down with butter-milk, I stood up to take my departure for Nineveh and Mosul. All the village elders politely rose with me, and one came a little way to hold my horse while I mounted. These were the most courteous Kurds I had yet met with; they seemed to be men of a superior stamp, and to be very well off. Large flocks of sheep and a considerable number of cattle were in view from the tents. The tents themselves seemed to be tolerably well furnished, carpets and cushions being visible through the raised sides or ends of each. The women, and even the little children, were warmly clad; and all—men, women, and children—were healthy-looking and well-fed.

At the Zab we should have been provided with fresh horses, but we were unable to obtain them, and had to push on for Mosul with the tired ones. The journey was therefore very slow and fatiguing. My horse became quite knocked up, and I had to pay a zaptieh to let me ride his Arab, which was of course fresh, the zaptiehs being changed at every stage, so that they and their horses are never tired out.

Towards sunset I came to a rising ground, whence the broad Tigris could be seen flowing north and south, with Mosul, imposing enough with its fortifications and its mosques and minarets, on the further bank. The river and the city appeared to be close at hand, and I imagined that a five-minutes' canter would bring us to the bridge which connects the Mesopotamian with the Assyrian bank. It took me half an hour's riding, as fast as the

zaptieh's horse could go, to traverse this portion of the site and reach the river. The whole space between the knoll where Mosul comes into view, and the river, is the site of Nineveh. The town indeed extended still further over the plain which the caravan route traverses, and Nimroud is far to the south-east. But the walled city and the great palaces of Sennacherib and Sardanapalus, and the greater part of the town, which was "a three days' journey," lay in the great plain between this ridge and the river. The mounds representing the ancient walls of the city proper, which occupied, as in London, a space more or less restricted in the midst of the great metropolis, are even now thirty feet in height; they enclose a considerable area in which corn grows, and the old gateways are still apparent. Indeed, of necessity one must ride through the gateway to pass into the enclosure formed by the still existing walls, or mounds, of sun-dried brick. Towers of great height flanked each gateway, and now form mounds considerably higher than those of the walls.

Adjacent to the western gate, and, therefore, on the side of the city nearest the Tigris, and within half a mile of its banks, is the great artificial mound of Koyunjik, now some sixty feet high and about a mile in circumference. The two great palaces of Sennacherib and Assurbanapal or Sardanapalus were built on the mound. Going towards the river, the traveller has this mound on his right hand; as he passes out through the western gateway, and at a little distance to his left, is the mound of Nibbi Yunis or Jonah, one half of which is

covered by a mosque in honour of the prophet, and by the houses of a little town, and the other part by the graves of the town's former inhabitants. It is impossible at present to excavate this mound thoroughly, or indeed at all, but some researches furtively made have proved that many things of interest there await some future Layard.

There is a brick bridge of many arches over three-fourths of the bed of the Tigris at Mosul. The channel near the city is some six or seven hundred feet broad, and is crossed by a bridge of pontoons, which can be removed when the floods come. The permanent bridge has occasioned a deposit of mud and gravel in the middle of the channel, forming an extensive island which has divided the river into two branches, and is now nearly always above the river level. Consequently the bridge passes over dry land, water flowing past both ends of it. This seems a curious arrangement when seen for the first time. We had to ford a wide and somewhat deep channel to get to the eastern end of the bridge. We rode across the bridge—we could just as easily have ridden across the island which it traverses—and the pontoon bridge not being available on account of an expected flood, we passed over to Mosul in a barge. A number of labourers from the excavations at Nineveh were my fellow-passengers, and most of them carried pieces of alabaster panels, found during the day, representing soldiers resting after a march, and other scenes of the old Assyrian time.

During the passage I was addressed in French by an

intelligent-looking young fellow, wearing the dress of the country, who very courteously bid me welcome to Mosul, and asked me whether I had any trouble on the way from Baghdad. I was at first considerably surprised at this unexpected greeting, and asked how my French-speaking friend knew that I was from Baghdad. He said that a telegram had come, stating that I was on my way, and I was, therefore, expected. He was, he said, Nimrod Rassam, the nephew of Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, who was carrying on the new excavations at Nineveh, and was then returning, after superintending a batch of the workmen during the operations in which they had lighted on the sculptured panels they were then carrying across to Mosul. I confess I looked at the sculptures recovered that afternoon, after being lost to sight and memory for more than two thousand years, with an interest which I am afraid they would scarcely have awakened if I saw them for the first time in a museum.

The current of the Tigris being very strong, the water rising every moment, the barge was carried a good way down before it was got into a convenient port, on the opposite bank, for disembarking its passengers. Unfortunately, the spot selected by chance for this operation was the foulest in all the city; every street was an open sewer, and the smell was unendurably nauseous. There are extensive tanneries in that neighbourhood, and the pestilential odour was given off in part by the peculiar compounds which tanners use to "sweeten" the best leather. We got

through this dreadful quarter at the double, and in due time found ourselves in the streets, which differed from those of Baghdad in being built of stone instead of brick or clay. Mr. Nimrod Rassam took me to the English Consulate, where I was very hospitably received by Mr. J. F. Russell. Colonel Nixon, the Political Agent at Baghdad, had very thoughtfully telegraphed to that gentleman, asking him to be on the look-out for me and he kindly offered to put me up—an offer which I need not say was gladly accepted. My host, a son of Dr. Howard Russell, who has shed so much lustre on the profession of journalism, was himself no stranger to the toils and vicissitudes of travel, having been one of the gallant band of Europeans, who, under Gordon Pasha, laboured to consolidate the work of civilization commenced by Sir Samuel Baker in Equatorial Africa, under the government of the Khedive. Of the group of nine, with whom he went up the Nile from Khartoum, he is now, young as he is, the last survivor, or the last but one.

Before speaking of Mosul, let us satisfy a natural curiosity, by glancing at the new excavations of Nineveh, the mounds of which are as conspicuous on the Assyrian bank of the river as the city of Mosul is on the Mesopotamian.

The excavations in progress at Nineveh, when I arrived there, were under the able and energetic direction of Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, who learned the art of excavating under Sir Austen Layard himself. The British Museum supplied the funds. In all previous

searches the practice was to drive galleries into the mounds, and, when chambers were found, to follow the line of the walls, removing the panelling or other interesting objects lighted upon, but leaving the rest of the space unexplored. These galleries were filled up with rubbish when others were opened. The new system is much more satisfactory. Every part of the site of a palace or a temple is thoroughly examined and it is impossible that anything whatever of interest can be passed by or overlooked. The search once made, is made for ever, and no other will be necessary. Very valuable results have been already obtained by this thorough-going method, and when it has been fully carried out we shall know all that it is possible to learn of the history and mode of life of the great Assyrian people, "the Romans of the East."

On the morning of the 1st May I rode with Mr. Rassam over portions of the site of Nineveh—it would have taken days to examine the whole—and he very kindly showed me all that was of most interest. The excavations on the sites of the palaces of Sennacherib and Sardanapalus look like great railway cuttings. The palaces in question were no doubt each three storeys in height above the great mound, thirty feet high, which was built above the plain on which the city stood. This vast mound, fully a mile in circumference, is now called Koyunjik, and is situated at the north-west of the city proper, and within its walls. It is directly opposite Mosul, and about half a mile from the river-banks. The palaces were built on its south-west and

north-east corners respectively. The *débris* of the buildings is now some thirty or forty feet above the top of the original mound or platform of sun-dried brick. The whole of it is being completely sifted, and removed in basketsful from one side of the "cutting" to the other, as the work proceeds. Sennacherib's palace stood at the south-west, and Sardanapalus's at the north-east end of the mound. The rest of the space was no doubt occupied by the royal gardens, and outhouses and stables may have also stood upon it. Under the marble pavement of Sardanapalus's palace, there was found, a day or two before my visit, a water conduit, built of bricks which had evidently formed part of an older edifice. One face of each of these bricks represents, in pretty high relief, portions of a human figure—a pair of arms crossed, the lower part of a face, a foot. When built up, of course they formed the complete figure of a man. The whole of the conduit has not as yet been dug out. When all the bricks are recovered, very possibly we shall get some curious specimens of a lost art—an art which had evidently fallen out of fashion before Sardanapalus built his palace. No doubt these brick figures adorned the halls of kings who lived before it became the custom to cover the sides of the royal chambers with sculptured marble. Each brick is about twenty inches square, and it evidently took eighteen or twenty to represent the full height of a man. In thickness they are three and a half inches. The edges of the sides intended to be seen were a quarter of an inch thicker than the rest of the brick, so that they

fitted close upon one another with the least possible seam, the bitumen, which was used as a cement, filling up the half inch between the two inner surfaces. The bricks are very well made and well baked, and the figures upon them show great care and skill.

One of the principal objects kept in view during these new excavations is the recovery of the remainder of the historical and legendary tablets, which were deposited in the royal libraries. The completion of the series giving the Isdubar legends, amongst which the account of the Deluge is the most remarkable, is above all things desired. The tablet giving the portion of the legend relating to the Deluge, which was first deciphered by the late Mr. George Smith, was discovered by Mr. Rassam; and therefore there is a special fitness in his being entrusted with the task of completing the search subsequently begun by Mr. Smith for the tablets still required to complete the series. He was so far successful in his operations that he had, within a few months of my arrival, discovered nearly fifteen hundred tablets, or portions of tablets, bearing cuneiform inscriptions. Additional parts of the Isdubar legends are amongst them, as well as lists of the gods, many prayers and invocations, and other matters throwing light upon the religion of the Assyrians.

Not the least valuable of the cuneiform records found would have been lost for ever, but for the steady observance of the rule, that nothing, however unpromising, was to be passed over. In excavating in the royal library of the palace of Sardanapalus—or Assurbanapal

—a piece of wall, four or five feet high, and eight or ten long, composed of sun-dried brick, stood exposed. All the *débris* around it had been removed and sifted, and nothing more was looked for. It was proposed to throw the rubbish from a new part of the cutting in the cleared space, and cover up the bit of useless wall. But Mr. Rassam directed that the wall should be first knocked down. In removing it the men came upon a literary treasure, equal in importance to any yet recovered from the whole site. Built into the wall, and as it were embedded in the sun-dried bricks, was a large decagonal terra-cotta cylinder, some twenty-two inches long, and two feet in circumference. It sides are closely covered with very small cuneiform characters, in ten columns, exactly like those of a modern newspaper. There are 1275 lines in all, containing an elaborate account of twenty years of the reign of Assurbanapal, and all his wars against Egypt. The columns are nearly the width of those of an average daily paper, and rather more than half the length. The subject is divided into sections by what a printer would call "rules" across the columns. Some sections occupy half a column, others a column and a half. We may expect great things from the translation of this most elaborate chronicle. It dates from the year 640 B.C.

The famous Assyrian winged-bulls, of which every one has read, were always found under the ruins of the towers flanking the great city gates. Two magnificent bulls, which were discovered by Sir Austen Layard during the progress of his excavations, close to the

palace of Sardanapalus, were too large for removal, and he carefully covered them up again, to save them from injury. But, unfortunately, the Turks conceived the idea of removing them to Constantinople, and they dug away the earth which would have preserved them. Finding that the colossal figures were far too heavy for easy removal whole, the individual entrusted with the task proceeded to cut off their heads, so as to remove them piecemeal. In the course of this operation the head of one was broken off and greatly damaged: it lies face downwards in the earth, as if grieving over the senseless mutilation to which it was subjected. The neck of the other was partly sawn through; but before the task was completed the whole design was given up, and the two magnificent pieces of sculpture were abandoned, after being injured in a freak of pure stupidity. They were left above ground, and now every mischievous urchin that passes chips off a bit of the marble, or makes the face of the least injured of the colossal bulls a target for stones. The nose of the godlike face has thus been broken. It is a fact worth mentioning that these figures, though in their places, were not quite finished when the city was destroyed by the combined armies of the Medes and Babylonians. Upon looking closely at the feathers of the eagle-wings which spring from the shoulders, it is seen that the last touches of some of them had yet to be given, when they and the city which they were to adorn were overwhelmed in a common ruin.

The walls of the city were composed of sun-dried brick, which is even yet almost as hard as bricks baked in a

kiln. They are now about forty feet broad at the base, narrowing somewhat towards the top, which was amply wide enough for Mr. Rassam and myself to canter along as upon a road. All the mounds are covered with a thick coating of greenest grass, and they form in that respect a great contrast to the mounds of Babylon, upon which no grass ever grows, the soil being impregnated with nitre, and composed largely of loose, drifting dust, the sport of any passing breeze. The Assyrians apparently understood the art of giving greater solidity to their sun-dried bricks than the Babylonians usually attained, and hence their city walls and the ground floors of their palaces have lasted while those of Babylon have relapsed into dust. The Assyrian palaces seem to have been always constructed of very substantial sun-dried bricks, faced over with thin slabs of alabaster, elaborately sculptured. I tried my hand with a pick upon one of these walls; the bricks did not yield to a moderate blow or show any disposition to crumble; they cut like very hard chalk. The palace of Assurbanapal was clearly destroyed by fire; a thin streak of charcoal and ashes distinctly shows where the roof and upper walls fell in upon the lower rooms and crushed everything into shapeless ruin. The fact that no treasure or jewellery has been found indicates that the victors had time to secure their booty before the destruction of the city was completed. Sardanapalus, as everybody knows, set fire to this palace himself, and perished in its ruins; it is supposed, from the appearance of the basement floor, that straw was laid in the rooms to aid the conflagration.

The great pyramidal mound of Nimroud, eighteen miles south of Koyunjik, marks the site of a magnificent temple that was, doubtless, in its general features similar to the temple of which the Birs Nimroud, south-west of Babylon, now constitutes the sole remains. It is situated near the point where the Greater Zab flows into the Tigris, and there are many mounds of great extent in that part of the country. This constituted the town of Kalakh, the seat of government of Assur-Nazurpal, a great Assyrian monarch, who died eight hundred and sixty years before Christ, after a reign of twenty-five years. Now, if this city of Kalakh be regarded as forming part of Nineveh, just as the city of Westminster forms part of London, the "great city" would be just the three days' journey—sixty miles in circumference—which the Book of Jonah asserts it to have been in the time of the writer. And, carrying the line eastward and northward from Nimroud, to include Balawat, which in the time of Assur-Nazurpal was a "suburb of Kalakh," in which that king built a palace for himself and a temple for the gods, and renamed it—it was then called "the Old Mound"—the "Suburb of Bel," the traveller coming from the south would have to go a day's journey, or about twenty miles to get to the city, properly so called, of Nineveh, as Jonah had to do before he began to cry out, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed." The Book of Jonah is supposed to have been written in the eighth century before Christ, and it speaks of the "great city" having within it one hundred and twenty thousand who "did not know their right hands from their

left" (that is to say children), and also "much cattle." Whence it may be inferred that Nineveh at that time was considered to have a population of about six hundred thousand inhabitants, and the fact of there being "much cattle" within its limits would show that, as in Babylon, a considerable portion of its area was not built over, but was used in part for agricultural purposes.

Close to the large mosque on Nebbi Yunis, an extensive artificial mound, a little to the south of Koyunjik, is a tomb which Mussulmans, Jews, and Christians, in these parts firmly believe to be that of the prophet Jonah. The tomb is in the courtyard of the mosque, and its guardians assert that the gourd, which "sprang up in a night," and died in a night, when the hot wind blew and the prophet sorely needed shelter, grows afresh every year. Only the Mussulmans are privileged to say their devotions at this shrine, neither Jews nor Christians being allowed access to it. The Jews, at all events, have fair ground of complaint against this exclusion, for Jonah was one of their own prophets. It is not to be supposed that the Mussulmans are influenced by the specious reasoning of those critics, who hold that the Book of Jonah is not the work of a Hebrew, because it is so different in conception and style from all the rest of the Books of the Old Testament; the message which the prophet had to deliver being addressed to a non-Hebrew race, who are represented as being, nevertheless, under the loving protection of the Lord quite as much as the peculiar people themselves.

The new excavations, as I have already intimated,

have not been confined to the site of the two palaces at Koyunjik, though I was able to visit those only. At Mr. Rassam's house, in Mosul, I was shown by that gentleman the valuable results of the searches conducted at Nimroud and at Balawat. In excavating at Nimroud he came upon the remains of a temple, a hundred and fifty feet long, and ninety broad. The altar was placed in the west, approached by three steps in front and five at each side. The width of the altar, including the side steps, was eighteen feet, and in height four. Rows of seats extended to the right and left of the altar, and there were also seats in pairs, which had rested against the pillars that had supported the roof. The terra-cotta ornaments of the ceiling lay scattered about on the floor of the temple, and they had the appearance of having been designedly broken by the destroyers of the temple. They were enamelled, and the prevailing colour is a creamy-white, on which are black lines, a quarter of an inch broad, arranged in geometrical patterns. One set of ornaments formed in some sort a Maltese cross. There were many bosses, some four or five inches in diameter, and from eight to twelve inches deep, and each pierced with a hole, doubtless to receive a ring from which a lamp could be hung. Gilding was used, but very sparingly, on some of the ornaments, and a few show traces of green. But white and black constituted the main resource of the artist who coloured these ceiling ornaments. An inscription at the base of one of the pendants was as follows: "The palace of Assur-Nazur-pal, the wealth of Bit Kitmuri, which is situated in

Kalakh." The temple was that of Istar, Queen of Kitmuri, the Assyrian Venus. The mysteries of her worship and that of her attendant nymphs, Pleasure and Passion, were celebrated in this temple, and spread over all Western Asia, and to the Island of Cyprus. Mr. Rassam found in the temple a large fragment of a terra-cotta cylinder of the same size and general appearance as that mentioned as having been lighted on in the old wall in Sardanapalus's palace, which records the receipt of tribute from eleven Cypriote kings, whose Greek names are all set forth, with the territories they ruled over.

It was while prosecuting this interesting search that Mr. Rassam heard that a similar discovery had been made some ten miles off, at a mound called Balawat. Some villagers while digging a grave, had come upon sheets of copper, covered with embossed figures. A couple of years before an Arab had sold Mr. Rassam a piece of copper with Assyrian figures on it, and gave it to be understood that the copper was found on the surface near Balawat. It was therefore very important to recover all that existed of the monument, whatever it was, of which fragments were coming to light by degrees. He started for Balawat with a party of workmen, but the natives flatly refused to allow any search to be instituted, as the ground was covered with graves. The firman procured from the Porte by Sir A. H. Layard expressly stated that cemeteries were not to be disturbed in any way;—a proviso which, if strictly interpreted, would put a stop to all excavations, for every

mound in and around Nineveh has at one time or other been used as a burial-ground by the villagers. The enterprise seemed hopeless, but fortunately Mr. Rassam persevered. He went to live at the village for a week; made friends with the head men; bought sheep from the villagers; and having soothed their fears, he got permission to set his men to work at a spot where the graves were few, or at least far between. He then went back to Nimroud, thinking all was in a fair way; but his departure was the signal for the outbreak of very serious riots, and the workmen had to desist from their work. So he had to return, and try once more the effect of diplomacy and backsheesh upon the villagers. The excavations were resumed, and after many vicissitudes, and a great deal of anxiety, he succeeded in unearthing a large number of long sheets of copper, beautifully embossed, which had once covered a trophy of cedar, of which little more than the traces could now be found.[1] The large bronze socket, in which the upright cedar beam had evidently stood, was found in its place, showing that the whole trophy had fallen over on its face, and lain undisturbed ever since. Pursuing the search, a second and a smaller trophy was discovered, and the bronze sockets of two others, now for ever lost.

These trophies stood in a temple, built by Assur-nazur-pal, and dedicated to Adar the God of War, and

[1] Since the above was in type the sheets of copper have been put together at the British Museum, and pronounced to be the covering of the gates of a temple or palace, and not of trophies properly so called.

Istar in her character of Goddess of War and Battle—the Bellona of the Assyrians. The altar of this temple was laid bare. The state in which the temple was found, like that of the one at Nimroud, told very plainly the story of its fall. The broken altars and scattered ornaments show that the triumphant Medes and Babylonians who sacked and destroyed Nineveh, wreaked their full vengeance on the temples of the Assyrians. Under the altar in the Balawat temple was a curious stone coffer, fitted with a marble cover, in which were two large marble tablets, over a foot in length, covered with cuneiform inscriptions. There was room for a third tablet in the coffer. The missing tablet was found on the ruined altar with a large piece broken off, evidently by a vengeful blow. At a distance of twenty yards, the piece which had been broken off and pitched away two thousand five hundred years before was discovered as the search proceeded.

The three tablets proved to have each the same inscription, which also appeared on the marble cover of the stone chest in which they were found. The inscription set forth that Assur-nazur-pal had enlarged the boundaries of the Assyrian Empire, pushing his conquests to the borders of the Great Sea—that is to say, the Mediterranean—and then enlarged and adorned his capital Kalakh. He built a palace—Tul Labiru—on the "Old Mound"—Balawat was even then the *old* mound, possibly the site of a city which had already disappeared under the dust of ages—and he also built the Temple in honour of the deities to whom he

owed his successes, and piously dedicated all his conquests. And the three tablets were intended to be the perpetual records of the dedication of the temple. All future kings were admonished to respect them :—

"Who this tablet shall see and many curses shall utter, Istar, the Lady of War and Battle, his weapons shall break, shall injure him, and spoil him.

"He who this tablet shall see and shall take it up, the faces he shall clean and victims he shall slay before it, and then to its place shall restore it, Assur, the great lord, his prayers shall give ear to, and in the battle of the Kings in the place of the onset the courage of his heart he shall find for him."

The events of the principal campaign of this monarch, that which led him to the shores of the Mediterranean, are set forth as in a panorama on the sheets of embossed copper found near the altar under which these tablets were discovered. Nothing whatever was known of this campaign from previous discoveries, though a tablet is still extant, cut in the rocks overlooking the sea near Beyrout, recording the fact that Assur-nazur-pal had reached that point. The cutting of that tablet is set forth pictorially on the invaluable copper sheets now recovered.

The reliefs are admirably executed in fine repoussé work. One thing new to Assyriologists, represented in the series of views, is the sacrifice of bulls to the gods: no such representation had been found before. The bull was thrown on his back, and the priest struck the sacrificial knife into the heart, while attendants held the

animal's legs upright by main force. In another compartment, a river is shown with the priests flinging portions of slaughtered animals—some portions look uncommonly like legs of mutton—into the sea, to propitiate the marine gods. Fish are shown swimming after the legs of mutton, and one curious-looking animal, not unlike a hippopotamus, though he has a head like that of a crocodile, is opening his capacious mouth for a joint.

CHAPTER IV.

MOSUL AND CERTAIN STRATEGIC CONSIDERATIONS.

Central position of Mosul—Fortifications commanded by hills—Commands the Tigris—Jezeerah and Diarbekir—The latter city the key to the valleys of the Euphrates and the Tigris—Country between Bayazid, Lake Van, and Mosul—Projected Russian expedition to Diarbekir—Facilities for constructing rafts—Danger to the Asiatic provinces—Expedition of Trajan to the Persian Gulf—The Emperor Julian—Present possibilities—The Anglo-Turkish Convention—The Christians and the Kurds along the line of a Russian invasion—Persian intrigues among the Kurds—Need of a railway for defensive purposes.

Mosul, the city of which the river view as seen from Koyunjik, on the site of Nineveh, on the opposite bank of the Tigris, may be found reproduced on the next page, is not as large as Baghdad, nor as prosperous; but it is more substantially built, and is now, and always must remain a place of considerable importance.

It enjoys all the advantages of situation which made Nineveh, on the opposite bank of the river, the Mistress of the East for centuries. Its name, Mosul, is an Arabic corruption of Mespila—Μεσπυλαι—the Central Gates, a designation bestowed upon the city because it was situated at the point of intersection of the routes to the Black Sea, the Persian Gulf, the Caspian, and the Mediterranean. The city is built upon a somewhat

VIEW OF MOSUL ACROSS THE TIGRIS.

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elevated site above the inundations of the river, and it is surrounded by a wall with a wide ditch. The wall is rapidly falling to decay, and it is, moreover, quite unarmed. But this is of little practical importance, for the city is nearly surrounded on the north by hills which completely command it. If the place has ever to be held against an enemy, the works for its defence must be constructed as at Plevna, on the adjacent heights.

The city walls are about five miles in circuit. All the space enclosed is not now occupied by houses: the plague on its last visitation took off so many of the inhabitants, that a considerable number of houses were left without tenants, and fell to ruin. The streets are narrow and tortuous, and filthy and foul smelling: it is a wonder that epidemics are ever absent from the town. But the site is admirable, and the fresh desert air blowing over the flat roofs of the houses makes amends, to a certain degree, for the almost total want of ventilation and cleanliness below. The Governor's house and the Government offices are in a plain about half a mile south of the city.

Situated at the head of the navigable waters of the Tigris, whoever holds military possession of Mosul will become the possessor, sooner or later, of the whole valley of that great river, and even of the Shat-el-Arab down to the Persian Gulf. For, when the waters are at their average height, troops and munitions of war can be floated down with the current on rafts or in barges to Baghdad in three days; or, at longest, in five, while a force could not be moved against Mosul from Baghdad

at all by water, and would take a fortnight to march by the land route. The disparity in the means of offence and defence possessed by the two cities, granting that the forces holding each were about equal, would thus be very great. Mosul would have nothing whatever to fear from the garrison of Baghdad, while that of the City of the Caliphs would never be altogether free from the danger of a surprise.

The northern city is, however, very much in the same position with regard to Jezeerah and Diarbekir that Baghdad occupies with regard to itself. For three or four months in the year the Tigris is navigable for rafts from Diarbekir, and, of course, from Jezeerah, which is considerably nearer Mosul. If, therefore, Diarbekir be seized and held by an adventurous enemy, Jezeerah may be occupied by simply floating a small force thus far and taking possession of it; or, if a force comes down direct from the mountains, by the route of Lake Van, and seizes Jezeerah, which could not resist a regiment for a quarter of an hour, Mosul would be as good as taken. The river would save the invaders the trouble of marching over the intervening country, and there would be no difficulties of transport. Mosul has very picturesque fortifications; but, setting aside the fact that they are out of date, crumbling, and in parts quite ruinous, they have been rendered quite useless by the increased range of modern artillery which would command them and the city from every point of the amphitheatre of low hills, which hem it in on all sides save that past which the Tigris flows.

While I was in Mosul I endeavoured to acquire what information I could as to the elements of the military problem which will some day be solved one way or the other in this region. Jezeerah, which was some six or eight centuries ago a very large flourishing city, the capital of an independent principality, is now a very small place, and very unhealthy, owing to causes which could be remedied very easily, and at slight cost to the Government. It is about seventy miles to the north-west of Mosul, and its admirable situation on the Tigris makes it the point of junction of a number of most important caravan routes. Diarbekir is about a hundred and forty seven miles north-west of Jezeerah, and is a large fortified town, having a population of about 60,000. The Russians have now definitively possessed themselves of Kars, which is due north of Mosul, at a distance of about four hundred miles. Midway between Kars and Mosul lies Lake Van. But Kars will not be the starting-point of a force destined to invade Turkish Armenia and Kurdistan, with a view to an ultimate descent into the valley of the Tigris. By choosing a spot near Bayazid, or seizing that exposed fortress once more, and making it the *place d'armes* of the expedition, they would lessen their march by fully a hundred miles, and reach Lake Van in less than a week. From Kars to Van the country is mountainous and very difficult, but, coming through Bayazid, an army on the march would find few obstacles to surmount. From Lake Van to Mosul the mountains are not easily passed. The army would probably come by Bitlis and then turn away a little

to the westward to Soart, which would place them in a favourable position for striking at Diarbekir, some eighty miles due west, or at Jezeerah; which lies some sixty miles to the south-east. The importance of seizing a strong town like Diarbekir, and thus securing their rear whilst once more amongst the mountains approaching Jezeerah, would probably decide the invaders to turn westward in the first instance. Could Diarbekir stand a siege? Its fortifications were built by the Romans to resist the battering-rams and catapults of ancient warfare: they are still strong, the black basalt of which they are composed having resisted the assaults of time. But it is open to doubt whether the city, as it now stands, could resist a force adequately supplied with even field-guns. I am not revealing anything that the Russians do not well know in stating this. Marshal Paskiewitch, during the war of 1828-9, contemplated a movement upon Diarbekir, intending to march thence to the Euphrates, where he designed to put his troops upon rafts, and float down with the current to the Persian Gulf. In the beginning of the Armenian campaign during the late war, it was at one time in contemplation to send a division to seize Diarbekir; but the reverses which delayed the capture of Kars rendered the execution of the plan impossible. The resistance of Kars will not interfere with the plans of future campaigns, and it is necessary to bear this fact steadily in mind.

The grand idea which Paskiewitch desired to carry into effect had reference to the valley of the Euphrates, rather than that of the Tigris; but it is almost certain

that in these days the advantages possessed by the latter river in its greater depth and more direct course, and in the fact that its banks are more generally cultivated, and consequently yield abundant supplies, would secure it the preference in the plans of a general who, having established himself at Diarbekir, was free to choose between the eastern and the western valley to descend to the Gulf. The choice between the two rivers would be his.

The forests at the head of both rivers supply the means of constructing with small cost light boats, or rafts, for floating reinforcements and military stores to any point where a general might choose to establish an intrenched camp, so that it would be almost impossible to shake his hold of the country, once he had entered and taken possession; and the line of the Euphrates might present certain special advantages of its own.

At Birijik—if the invader chose to establish his head-quarters there—he would be within four marches of Aleppo. At Beles, one hundred miles lower down the Euphrates, he would be still within one hundred and twenty miles of the port of Scanderoon. Thus the whole flank of the Ottoman Empire would be turned, and all the resources it draws from its Syrian and Arabian provinces would be lost to it without a blow. Egypt would not send a single battalion to the seat of war with so redoubtable a neighbour almost at her doors: the Syrian towns would scarcely wait to be summoned before surrendering. Not even the most decisive successes that could be hoped for in Armenia and Anatolia,

could place the Russians in so commanding a position as this, which would not cost them even a battle and a march. Once an army gets into the Mesopotamian plains, there is no fortified place there that could withstand it for an hour, and the current of the rivers would save even the trouble of locomotion. There would be nothing absolutely novel in this line of invasion. The Emperor Trajan, and a couple of centuries later the Emperor Julian, descended the Euphrates with large fleets put together in the Armenian mountains. Trajan's vessels were constructed of wood cut in the mountains beyond Nisibis, and could be taken to pieces and put together again without difficulty. They were carried from the Tigris to the Euphrates, and from the Euphrates to the Tigris as the necessities of the campaign required, and eventually the victorious Emperor found himself at the head of the waters of the Persian Gulf. There, looking out over the sea, and seeing ships sailing to India, he lamented that he was not as young as Alexander in order that he might carry his eagles to the Ganges! But Rome had then reached the extreme limit of her power. Trajan's successors, far from dreaming of the conquest of India, found themselves obliged to give up to the barbarians that very Roumania which Trajan himself had conquered, and which now the Russians are conquering, or at all events overbearing and traversing, in their turn.

The Emperor Julian floated his army down the Euphrates in eleven hundred vessels, evidently of the rough and ready sort producible in any required numbers on

the southern slopes of the Kurdish mountains. There seems to be good reason to believe that Noah's Ark was built in those parts; at all events the tradition is that it rested on a mountain in Kurdistan which we shall see a little later on. However that may be, it is certain that from the remotest ages to the present hour vessels, or rafts, or coracles have been constructed in those uplands which the Russians, once at Diarbekir, would have within their grasp, and that the Euphrates and the Tigris are navigable by their means for immense distances, and with the minimum of cost and trouble. From Birijik to Bussorah on the Persian Gulf the distance is 1100 miles, and the river has a depth of six or eight feet nearly the whole way, except at four fords where the depth is only four feet. Its current travels at the rate of three miles an hour: there are no rapids to speak of. During the summer months the water is deepest owing to the melting of the snows on the mountains. But the Tigris is deeper and more rapid than the Euphrates, and is much better adapted than that river for the transport of troops and stores.

And here let me again say, that in speaking of the possibility of the Russians making a clean sweep of the Turkish power in Mesopotamia and Syria, I am neither indulging in an idle fancy, or suggesting to the Muscovite a plan of operations which might not otherwise occur to him. In a memorandum submitted to the Duke of Wellington, in 1829, by the Government of India, upon the necessity of establishing means of communication overland between India and England, the

defenceless condition of the Euphrates Valley was spoken of very seriously, and these emphatic words were used :— "If the Russians choose to take it, the whole country from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf is theirs (as if we choose to preoccupy it, it is ours). Dockyards may be formed in Baghdad and Bussorah, and vessels of any size may be floated to the latter. Admitting this possibility then, in the event of our being at war with Russia, we must keep a strong naval force in the Persian Gulf. If a Russian invasion of India be within the limits of possibility, it is well to pass under review all the means by which it can be accomplished and prevented. One of the means of accomplishment would be the occupation by Russia of Baghdad and Bussorah."

The danger, therefore, is not quite chimerical. It was foreseen half a century ago, and it is quite on the cards that we may see it realized. What course would be then left for England to take? Could she remain a passive spectator while the Ottoman Empire was pierced by a lance from behind, and blotted from the list of States? A notion used to be very prevalent that if England could secure for herself the reversion of Egypt, on the breaking-up of the Turkish Empire, she need feel no anxiety as to what became of the rest of the Sick Man's possessions. That was the Emperor Nicholas' declared opinion. But putting aside other and very grave considerations, let us ask ourselves seriously if Russia took and kept "the whole country from the Black Sea to the Persian Gulf," how long could we hold Egypt? We could only hold it while we kept in it

a garrison equal in strength to any army the Russians choose to bring against it from the side of Syria. Egypt, as the first Napoleon said, has no frontier but the desert, and the desert is no longer impassable when you collect a sufficient number of camels to carry water for the troops. There are no mountains to be traversed, no rivers save the Nile, which might prove an obstacle. Therefore, any invader that can bring into the country an army larger by even a few thousand men than that of the defenders must conquer it, for he will have all his forces together, while the defenders must leave garrisons, however small, in the chief towns, to protect them from a *coup de main*. England could hold Egypt against the world, provided always that there was no access to it, save by sea. But she could only hold it at a cost that would be ruinous against a power that had established herself in the valley of the great Mesopotamian rivers. It is therefore evident that our interest in the fate of the Turkish Empire could not in any case be limited to the future of Egypt. We must take thought also of the future of Syria and of the valley of the Euphrates; and of Turkish Armenia and Anatolia, with whose destinies that future is involved.

These considerations will probably be held by practical politicians to be the best justification of the Anglo-Turkish Convention, by which England stands pledged to assist in the defence of the Asiatic dominions of the Sultan in the case of renewed aggressions from the north. As things now stand, the Turks shorn of the strength which the possession of Kars formerly conferred upon them,

could not make good their defence single-handed in resisting the inevitable invasion. Where is the fortress which could supply its place for a month? Bayazid surrendered almost at the first summons at the outbreak of the late war. Erzeroum is considered incapable of standing a long siege. The Russians would begin a campaign now where they were glad to find themselves at the end of previous wars—in possession of Kars, the most renowned fortress in Asia; and they could direct all their energies to enterprises of great pith and moment. It is morally certain that amongst the first to which they would turn their attention would be that which would bring them to Diarbekir and Jezeerah; threatening Mosul and Baghdad on the one hand, and the valley of the Euphrates, with Aleppo and cities of equal importance beyond it, on the other.

The inducements to such an undertaking would be so great that they would certainly prove irresistible, if England or some other first-rate Power were not pledged beforehand to furnish the Turks with all necessary strength to resist it. Once the preliminary difficulties of the march from Bayazid to Lake Van, and from Lake Van by Bitlis to Soart, and thence to Diarbekir and Jezeerah, were surmounted—the whole distance being some three hundred miles—the rest would be easy. The country yields ample food for the support of the population, for export, and for sheer waste. There are inexhaustible forests of fir, oak, walnut, and other timber, on both sides of the Tigris and its tributaries. Rafts of wood are now regularly floated down from

those forests to supply the markets of Diarbekir, Jezeerah, Mosul, and Baghdad; and the rivers furnish a ready and convenient highway for the barges, or rafts, which can be easily made of that timber, as Trajan, and after him Julian, found to be the case so long ago.

The resistance likely to be experienced from the tribes sparsely inhabiting the more northern portions of the territory to be traversed, is, of course, a matter of considerable importance in calculating the chances of such an enterprise. The inhabitants of Kurdistan are for the most part Mohammedans; the proportion of Mussulmans to non-Mussulmans being about three to one. The Kurds would probably[1] fight against the Russians, and in the mountains their resistance would be to a certain extent serious; though in previous campaigns in Armenia their undisciplined contingents were a greater embarrassment to the Turkish commander than to the invaders. They could not be brought to face the enemy in fight, and their forays were directed with impartiality against the villages of friends and foes. The Nestorians and other Native Christians, and even the Yezidees, or Devil-worshippers, would on the other hand probably side with the Russians, not out of any particular antipathy to the Sultan's rule, but because they are kept in constant terror of plunder and outrage at the hands

[1] Though the Kurds would probably be hostile to the Russians, it is by no means certain that they would not aid them. They undertook to co-operate with Paskiewitch in his contemplated advance upon Diarbekir.

of the Kurds, who are Mussulmans. The Jews would certainly not welcome the substitution of Russian for Turkish rule; but they, too, are grievously oppressed by the lawless Kurds, and whatever side the latter were fighting for, would be regarded with more or less distrust for the time being.

It is particularly in the country around Lake Van that the Nestorian Christians are in a state of dangerous disaffection, arising out of the outrageous oppression of the Kurdish mountaineers; though very much the same state of things exists in all the mountain country. It is well known that the Russians have agents constantly at work amongst the Nestorians and Jacobites; and there is some likelihood of those sects being induced to declare themselves orthodox Greeks, in order to acquire a title to the active sympathy and support of Russia. As for the Kurds, they are not left wholly to their own devices. The Persians have them in hand, and are perpetually intriguing amongst them with a view to making them dissatisfied with the Turkish yoke. They are taught that it is much safer to live on the Persian side of the frontier line than on the Turkish; their raids across the borders are not interfered with, and there is good evidence to show that raids have been greatly encouraged by Persian officials. Persia is constantly encroaching on her neighbour's mountain territory, and she finds it to her advantage to have the sympathy of the Kurds on her side; thus both Christians and Kurds are kept in a state of effervescence by insidious encouragement from without, and the feeble-

ness and laxity of the Turkish administration give full scope to foreign intrigue. In the opinion of all those with whom I spoke on the subject, the whole state of things in Kurdistan might be changed in the course of a twelvemonth by a little firmness and energy on the part of the officials representing the Government. The power of the Kurds for organized resistance has been completely broken, and the military strength of the Government can be no longer contested by them. The change has, even as it is, greatly ameliorated the lot of the Christian and the Jewish population; but to complete the work, a sufficient force of mounted native police should be organized and properly paid, and the administration of justice improved. The Christians finding themselves properly protected would soon learn to have confidence in the Government, and cease to cast their eyes towards Russia; and the Kurds seeing that the law was too strong for them would take to honest industry for a living, and turn a deaf ear to the incitements of Persian agents of disaffection.

But as things stand there can be little doubt—very few people at Mosul, at all events, seemed to have much doubt—that the non-Mussulman elements of the population, though not actively disaffected to the Sultan, would look upon the advance of an invading army as a dispensation of Providence in their favour. And the Kurds, with their matchlocks and their wild habits, could not be relied on to offer any very strenuous resistance. If, therefore, the lower country from the mountains to the head of the Gulf is to be safeguarded from rapid

conquest by a force sufficiently strong and adventurous to make its way from the country about Bayazid to Lake Van, and thence to Diarbekir and Jezeerah and Mosul, measures must be devised—politically—for restraining and organizing the Kurds and satisfying the claims of the non-Mussulman population to protection and equal justice ; and in a military sense, for enabling sufficient forces to be brought up from the Mediterranean on the one side, and from the Gulf on the other, for the defence of those cities, the possession of which would give the invader access to the valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, and the power of choosing whichever was the more exposed at the moment for sudden conquest. A railway from Alexandretta, by Aleppo, Birejik, and Orfa, to Diarbekir and Mosul, and on to Baghdad, would enable the forces of the Sultan, and his allies, to be massed at the threatened points before the enemy could arrive to seize them. But as matters are now, the advantages will be unquestionably on the side of the invader in the event of a new war between Turkey and Russia.

CHAPTER V.

SOMETHING ABOUT THE MOSUL PEOPLE.

Area of the Pashalik of Mosul—Christian population of the city—The Chaldeans—The Nation and the question of the Patriarchate—The Bull of Pope Pius IX.—Discord in the Church—Turkish troops protect the sacred edifice—Diplomatic intervention—A dead-lock—Imperious character of the Bull—Feud between the Jacobites and the Syrians—The Dominican Mission—*Salles d'asile*—Hospital—Missionary printing-office—Arabic translation of the Bible—Cardinal Bonaparte—The American Mission—The Mohammedan population—The bowing minaret—Visit to a Sheik—Hospitality to strangers a religious duty—The Sheik's opinion on the disasters of the war—Feeling of insecurity amongst the Christians—Their fears probably unfounded—Opinion of a missionary—Complete toleration—Incompetence of officials—Mosul-ine—The women of Mosul—The Hyde Park of Mosul—Visit to the Governor's representative—Resources of the Pashalik—Minerals—Sheep—Bread—Want of garden produce.

THE city of Mosul is the seat of a Pashalik bearing the same name which is subordinate to Baghdad. It covers 12,000 square miles of territory. The population of this immense area is estimated at only half a million, five-sixths being Mussulmans. Nearly 10,000 Christians live in Mosul, and their religious dissensions give no little trouble to the Turkish authorities. I visited three churches, one belonging to the Chaldeans, and two to

the Jacobites and Syro-Catholics in common, and at each of them I found a guard of Turkish soldiers to keep the peace. Camp bedsteads were placed outside the doors, on which the soldiers slept at night; the sentries pacing up and down presented arms as I entered. The churches are large and well-built of cut stone, alabaster being freely used to heighten the architectural effect; but the paintings and other ornaments in the interior are very tawdry and tasteless.

The Chaldeans are by far the most numerous and influential body of Christians in Mosul. Their Patriarch had just died before my visit, and the place was full of intrigues with respect to the appointment of a successor. The Chaldean Church has for some three centuries past acknowledged the supremacy of the Pope; but it possessed, until 1869, rights and immunities of which it was and is still very tenacious. In that year Pius IX. issued a Bull which set aside nearly the whole of the ancient constitution of the Church, and transferred to the See of Rome many prerogatives until then appertaining to the Patriarch and the priests and people of the Chaldean "nation," as it is called. The Chaldeans number some 35,000 families, and look upon themselves as a "nation," because they hold themselves to be the descendants of the ancient Chaldeans, who were probably of the same race as the Assyrians. The Patriarch and the people rejected the Bull which the Pope promulgated for their behoof. Two or three years ago, however, the Patriarch was summoned to Rome, and put under pressure, which he resisted. But at Constantinople, on

his way back, he was still further pressed; the Austrian Ambassador to the Porte taking, it is said, an unofficial but nevertheless effective part in influencing his decision. The old man who had resisted the importunities of Pope and Cardinals could not withstand the wiles of more worldly diplomatists; and it is said by his flock that he accepted a sum of 5000 francs to acknowledge the Bull. As a consequence he was looked upon as a traitor and a renegade by the Chaldean "nation." But ten out of the fourteen Bishops of the Church were won over by him; and the Bull was acted upon as embodying the law of the Chaldean Church while he lived. When in his last illness, he appointed one of the ten conformist Bishops his "substitute," to administer the Patriarchate in his stead. When he died the acting Patriarch continued to act, and then came the storm. The "nation" revolted against the Bullist Bishops with the acting Patriarch at their head; and declared that they would have nothing more to do with them, and would not allow them to enter the churches or to officiate. Many of the clergy sided with the great body of the laity. The richer and more educated of the laity espoused the party of the Patriarch-substitute, and affected to despise the popular movement as that of a mere ill-conditioned rabble. But the majority of the nation had a strong legal point in their favour. By Turkish law a substitute can only act in the lifetime of his principal, and the Patriarch being dead, his substitute could of course exercise no legal authority. But he came to Mosul and seized the key of the principal church, and removed the

vestments to his own house. The Chaldean nation at once rose in tumult, and proposed to retake the key and the vestments by force.

The Bishop, naturally alarmed, hired a number of Mussulmans to protect him; men, I was informed, of the most fanatical and desperate character, who would only be too glad of an excuse for shedding Christian blood. They garrisoned the Bishop's house, which is just opposite the church, over which a number of Chaldean men and lads kept guard. Things began to look very serious, for affrays were continually occurring all over the town between members of the two parties, and no one could tell how soon a pitched battle might take place between the acting Patriarch's men for the capture of the church, and the others equally anxious to recapture the key and the vestments. The priests could not well officiate without the vestments, which the Bishop had so cleverly carried off, and therefore the motive for recovering them, by force if necessary, was sufficiently strong. So the Pasha sent down half a company of soldiers to the church to garrison it, and prevent a fight either there or at the Bishop's house across the street. The Bishop thereupon dismissed his Mussulman body-guard; but the opposite party did not consider it safe to withdraw its garrison from the church. When I visited it the keyless door stood wide open; Turkish soldiers lounged against the outer walls; rifles were piled around; and inside were twenty or twenty-five men and boys on duty to prevent the Bishop from entering and taking possession. Their meals were

brought to them in the sacred building by their women folk.

Meanwhile the usurper kept the key, and the Turks would not make him give it up. The French Consul, and, I was informed, the French Ambassador at Constantinople, sustained his cause; the Austrian Ambassador, at the request of the Pope, also gave him a useful support. Sir A. H. Layard, on the other hand, strove to have justice done to the Chaldean "nation." The Turkish officials were hard set on both sides, and tried to do as little as they could so as not to offend either party. The consequence was that they were accused by each faction of taking bribes to favour the other. Things seemed to me to be at a dead-lock. By the Bull which the late Patriarch and ten out of fourteen Bishops accepted, the new Patriarch must be elected by the Bishops alone, "without any participation by the priests or laity under any pretext whatever." But the Patriarch they elect is almost certain to be repudiated by the bulk of the laity and by many of the priests. By the old custom of the Church the election was made by the Bishops in accord with the priests and laity. The "nation" refuses to have anything to say to the ten Bishops, and declares that it will elect a Patriarch of its own; but no Patriarch can be inducted who is not accepted by the Pope and granted a firman by the Porte.

The section of the community—a very small one—which supports the Bull and the Bishops, maintains that the old system had become intolerable, the late Patriarch

himself admitting men to holy orders, and even to the episcopal bench, who were quite unfit for the sacred calling; and they assert that in one case a groom was made a Bishop. It was to put a stop to this scandalous state of things, they say, that the Pope issued the bull. Of the truth of all this I know nothing. I read the bull, a copy of which in Latin and Chaldean was brought to me by an anti-Bullist, and it seemed to me to be a most revolutionary document, taking no account of vested rights, and setting aside the ancient privileges of the Chaldean Church, without even a pretence of doing so at the request of those concerned, or in compliance with their wishes.

Of the causes of the deadly feud between the Jacobites and the Syrians I heard nothing. They used to worship in different parts of the same churches until a quarrel arose. Now the Turkish troops have to keep them from flying at each other's throats. The Jacobites were said to be the aggressors, and to have endeavoured to keep the Syrians out of the churches which were built originally with Syriac money; but then it was one of the Syro-Catholic party told me this. The Roman Catholics have a very well-managed Mission near the centre of the town, under the charge of the Dominicans. After thirty years' labour, they have succeeded in building a very fine church, with large day-schools attached, in which children of all classes are taught by the missionaries and by French nuns. Six nuns came out five years ago, and another detachment of six a few days before I arrived. One of the youngest died on her arrival from typhoid

fever, caught on the journey. There are 150 boys and 200 girls in the schools. The sisters have opened "*salles d'asile*" in different quarters of the town for little Christian children under five years of age, who used to run about the streets, where they learned nothing good. They are taught and amused by the nuns, with Arab girls as monitors, on the *kinder-garten* system. It is a very pretty sight to see a hundred of these little things go through all sorts of marches and counter-marches under little sergeants and corporals, the eldest of whom are five years of age. It is said that no Christian children now lie about the streets of Mosul; all the little things seen in the dust and dirt of the bazaars are either Moslems or Jews.

A few years since a Frenchman, sent by the Emperor Napoleon to carry decorations to the Shah, fell ill at Mosul, and, having no proper medical care, died. His mother gave 2000*l.* to the Mission to found a hospital, and it is now built. A medical "brother" is the physician, and the sisters act as nurses. This is the only hospital in Mosul, and Moslems as well as Christians freely resort to it.

Attached to the Mission is a large printing-office, supplied with founts of Arabic and Roman type, presses, and machines. An Arabic version of the Bible is being set up and stereotyped, the expense being defrayed by Cardinal Bonaparte, who stipulates that each church, bishop, and clergyman in the country shall get copies free of charge; that a certain number shall be distributed gratuitously among the laity; and that

after the rest of the first impression has been disposed of a number shall be printed annually, or as often as may be necessary, for sale at a small fixed price, the profit to go to support the Mission at Mosul. The work was one of great labour. A Chaldean Bishop at Diarbekir corrected the proof-sheets, and the delay consequent on sending the proofs backwards and forwards by the fortnightly post greatly retarded the work. The type with which this Bible and the other works in Arabic are printed were procured, I hear, from the American Missionary Institution in Beyrout—a large establishment which is the head-quarters of the American Protestant Missions in the Turkish Empire. The Dominican printing establishment at Mosul is very complete, having stereotyping and electrotyping apparatus of the best kind, and type is now made on the premises; Mosul youths have been trained as compositors, and they are very expert and intelligent. The population in this country is equal to any in the world in physique and intelligence; there is nothing which skill and industry can accomplish elsewhere which these people could not do if properly trained. The dedication of the Bible—"Ementissimo ac serenissimo principi Luciano Bonaparte"—was being printed "in colours" when I was shown over the printing office. The other business in hand was the production of Arabic translations of classic writers, and of European school-books, to supply the means of carrying on the work of the school in the lower classes. The elder boys are all taught in French, and some of them showed great proficiency in mathe-

matics. As in Baghdad, the boys here showed great aptitude for learning French, speaking it with great fluency and correctness, and with a good accent. None of them were learning English. French is the only European language understood anywhere from Baghdad to the Levant. The French missionaries have diffused it very generally among the educated Christians of all denominations by assiduously teaching it in their admirable schools.

Some years ago an American Mission was established at Mosul, but, not meeting with much success, it was removed to Mardin, where we shall have the pleasure of looking in upon it in due time. A small Methodist community of about one hundred and fifty members is still existing in Mosul to show that the labours of the American Missionaries there were not wholly without result. They are not called Methodists or Protestants by the other Christians and the Moslems, but "Americans," after their first teachers.

With respect to the Mohammedans, there is not much to be said. They are quiet and tolerant if they are not keeping pace with the Christians in the matter of education. Formerly Mosul had the reputation of being one of the most turbulent and fanatical towns in the Ottoman empire. But now the fires of fanaticism are nearly extinct. The town is, besides, composed of "quarters," which are very jealous of each other; if the Mussulmans of one quarter came to attack the Christians in another, they would be resisted as intruders, and Mussulman would fight with Mussulman. It is not so

very long since that pitched battles used to take place between different quarters for less cause. I saw hundreds of bullet-marks in the walls of houses attesting the severity of these engagements.

Having visited the churches of the Christians, I naturally desired to see something of the numerous mosques that adorn Mosul. I was informed that a mosque I could not possibly be allowed to enter, but that if a minaret would serve my purpose, a little diplomacy and a little backsheesh might open my way to the summit of the highest. The highest minaret in Mosul is attached to the principal mosque, and is a remarkable structure in its way. It is several feet out of the perpendicular, though it starts fair from the ground, and at the top, before putting on its gallery and dome, it regains an erect posture. Its attitude is that of a man bowing. Mussulmans and Christians in Mosul are agreed that the minaret owes the curve in its back to the fact that it made a bow soon after (I should say a little before) it was finished. But they disagree upon the somewhat secondary point as to the object of the minaret's salutation. The Moslems state that it bowed to the Prophet. The Christians are equally certain that it made a reverence to the Virgin Mary, whose tomb, it will be remembered, was pointed out to me about a mile to the north of Ervil or Arbela.

After a little negotiation, carried on through the medium of Mr. Nimrod Rassam, I was permitted to go to the top of this minaret. From its gallery I enjoyed a splendid view of the city beneath, surrounded

by its wall, the flexible Tigris making great loops above and below the town, and broadly separating Mesopotamia from the old Assyria, and Mosul from the mounds of Nineveh.

Descending from the minaret I was informed that if I would take off my boots I might be admitted to an interview with Sheikh Mohammed, the great Moulvi of Mosul, a man of immense influence with all the faithful of the town. I had heard from many Christians that the more pious of the Sheikh's co-religionists wait upon him three or four times a year, and urge him to ascend the minaret with the curved spine, and call all good Moslems together then and there to massacre the unbelievers. But the Sheikh has always resisted these importunities, though Mosul Christians, who are a little nervous, do not feel quite sure that he may not some day yield to them.

I made no difficulty about my boots; I took them off, and was ushered into a large chapel-like room, which I was told served as a mosque when the congregation was not sufficient to fill the great hall. On a carpet sat the Sheikh, an intelligent-looking man of middle age, in the old Turkish dress, flowing robes and capacious turban. He saluted me with his hand, but did not even make believe to rise. He sat quite still and most provokingly cool and unconcerned. Remembering the great courtesy of the much more important chiefs of the Shiah communities at Kerbella and Nejef, I felt for an instant somewhat nettled at this apparent rudeness, especially as I had gone to the trouble to take off my boots to be

civil to him. However, he motioned me to take a seat on his carpet; I sat down and we exchanged salutations.

I learned afterwards that the Archbishop of the Jacobites had recently paid him a visit, and was much offended by the placid refusal of the Sheikh to rise, even an inch, to receive him. "How!" said the Archbishop, "I come here across the city to visit him in courtesy, and he does not even get up from his seat to receive me!"—to which remonstrance the Sheikh replied, "I did not ask him to come and see me!" The Pasha of Mosul, I hear, is received with the same hauteur, and reverently kisses the holy Sheikh's hand as a mark of homage.

Once seated by his side, I had no occasion to complain of any want of courtesy. He was very affable and conversational. After the usual formal compliments and inquiries after my health, he said that he was glad to see me as a traveller. Religion ordered that travellers should be honoured and protected, for they were away from their own people, and came trusting to the hospitality and kindness of strangers. He hoped I had no reason to complain of things since I came to this country?

I said I had received great courtesy everywhere, and especially at Kerbella and Nejef, and other holy places which I had visited. He said that was a matter of course; travellers passing through a strange country had a right to kindly treatment; it was a religious duty to receive them kindly, and do all that was possible for them.

I was then interrogated as to the state of things religious in India. Were not most of the people of India Mussulmans? I told him that forty millions were of the religion of Mohammed. The rest he supposed were mostly Christians, and he heard that there were also many idolaters. What idols did they worship? He appeared much concerned when informed that the "idolaters" outnumbered Mohammedans and Christians together in the proportion of six to one, and said that it was very wicked to worship idols.

With respect to the war, I was, as usual, closely questioned. Having answered upon all the points which the Sheikh's eager desire for information suggested to him, he said that the whole business had been mismanaged, and that the Sultan's generals were the cause of the misfortunes which had occurred. I said that no doubt there was incapacity on the part of some of the generals; but, on the whole, the Turks had made a very stout fight, and that their defeat was after all to be ascribed to the fact that they were overborne by the forces which the Russians were able to bring up, their numbers being so great. But this opinion, which I intended to be consolatory, my interpreter, young Mr. Nimrod Rassam, refused to pass on, for he said it would irritate the Sheikh, who firmly believed that neither Russia nor any other Christian Power was really as strong as Turkey, and that all the successes of the enemy must, as a matter of course, be due to the treachery or the blundering of the Turkish generals. I therefore modified the remark, and spoke only of the brave resist-

ance of the Turkish soldiers, and the great losses which they succeeded in inflicting on the victorious Muscovs. The Sheikh said that the soldiers were brave men, and no fault was to be found with them. The Russians, he said, would certainly have been beaten, but for the "bad men" who were directing the Turkish operations. Some of the officers were incapable, and some took money from the Russians. If the men at the head of affairs had acted properly, the result of the war would have been different. This is an opinion very generally entertained in these parts, and its wide diffusion may lead some day to unexpected developments. The faith of the Mussulman population in the capacity and honesty of their rulers seems to have received a very rude shock from the events of the war. Sheikh Mohammed seemed to me to be a clear-headed, sensible man, with a very pronounced idea of his own superiority, moral and religious, as a man and a Moulvi, but not to be a fanatic by any means. When I rose to take my departure, he gave me his hand to touch, and smiled civilly; but he made no pretence of rising from his seat.

While in Mosul I was desirous of getting some definite idea of the degree of security enjoyed by the Christian population at the hands of the Government, and of their Moslem fellow-subjects, and I made careful inquiries on the subject from all whom I met. The native Christians themselves professed to be in a state of trepidation, asserting that at any moment the Mussulmans might rise and massacre them all, and the

authorities would not protect them. But they could give no proof that these fears—of which they seemed rather proud—were well founded. They always came round when pressed to the imaginary notion that Sheikh Mohammed had been often asked to call the Mussulmans together that they might unanimously put the Christians of all persuasions to the sword; the fact, that the Sheikh had not done what it was alleged he had been asked to do, had no weight with these alarmists, for he might be found some day in a more complacent mood.

The chief of the Dominican Mission, a very enlightened man who has been for some years resident in Mosul, did not share these misgivings. He did not consider that he ran any risk of losing his life through Mohammedan fanaticism. As for the Government, he said that the religious toleration enjoyed under it was complete. It never in any way interfered with what the Christians did or taught in the schools or the churches. It was impossible to desire more absolute liberty of worship or teaching. But, in civil administration, there was great scope for improvement, and, indeed, an absolute necessity for it. The laws were good, but they were not steadily applied. The laxity and want of thoroughness which characterized every department were inexplicable, and allowed even the best-conceived measures to result in mischief. "For instance," said this impartial critic, "the Turks some years ago planted a colony of Circassians in the country south of Mardin, to act as a breakwater against the Arabs who were perpetually

raiding upon the villages of the Christians and sedentary Kurds in the country through which you are about to pass. But they took no trouble to organize the Circassians properly, and keep them under intelligent supervision; they left them to their own devices in the beginning, before they learned how to till the soil—which is very rich—and get a living honestly; so the Circassians took to plundering like the Arabs, and now, instead of being in danger from one robber, you have to deal with two." The state of affairs with regard to the Circassian Colony at Ras el Ain, in southern Kurdestan, was, I afterwards learnt, just as the worthy missionary described it.

The Christians of Mosul are for the most part Chaldeans, next to whom come the Armenians. The Jews number from four to five thousand, and are an important body, many of the richer families being engaged in trade on a considerable scale. The fez is more generally seen in Mosul than in Baghdad, Christians and Jews wearing it as well as Turks. The bulk of the population is of either Arab or Kurdish blood, the former predominating. The language in general use is the Arabic, Kurdish being spoken by the Kurds amongst themselves, and Turkish only amongst the officials and persons of Turkish race, who are not many.

Every lady who wears *mousseline de laine*, or simple muslin, ought to know that those tissues were originally manufactured in Mosul, from which they derived their name. The fine tissues called Mosul-ine are still manufactured in the town, but not to any great extent. A

coarser fabric of cotton, and dyed blue, is manufactured in considerable quantities and exported.

The women of Mosul, like their sisters in Baghdad, hide their faces behind horse-hair veils or masks when they go out to bathe or to visit their friends. The women of the lower classes are not, however, very particular on this point. The Arab women here, as in other parts, appear to be very fond of adding to their charms by a skilful use of blue colouring matter on their faces and arms. Around Baghdad two vertical lines from the upper lip to the chin are considered fashionable. At Mosul they dye the lower lip a heavenly blue, a bright azure. The effect is certainly curious, but I think one must be educated to appreciate its beauty. To the unsophisticated eye the original cherry colour is preferable. Even the Briton, proud of his descent, who remembers the partiality of his ancestors for blue woad, cannot bring himself to admire the blue nether lips of these Arab matrons.

It is considered fashionable for the well-to-do in Mosul to have tents pitched outside the gates of the city, on the south-west, in the little plain, or the slope of the hill rising up from it, and to go thither for an hour or two in the evenings, to enjoy the cool breeze from the river or the desert. "All Mosul" turns out in the evening, to stroll about near the tents, and exchange greetings and gossip. Cigars and coffee are at hand in every tent, to offer to casual visitors. The French consul's tent has the tricolour gaily fluttering overhead; Turks, Jews, and Christians have tents, or sit down on

the grass, or on big stones, the remains of old buildings now fallen to ruin. The little plain in question forms the Hyde Park or Bois de Boulogne of Mosul, but the Mosulis resemble Froissart's Englishman in this, that they take their pleasure sadly. Possibly the fact that they have to cross a cemetery, composed superficially of dilapidated grave-stones, before they reach their tents and pleasure ground, depresses them. Whatever the cause, they have a woe-begone air which I did not observe in any of the towns farther to the south.

While I was at Mosul, the Mutserrif, or Governor, was out at the head of 400 troops, with two guns, to restore order amongst the Kurds, nine hours' march from the town, who were fighting amongst themselves, refusing to pay taxes, and rifling caravans. It was scarcely expected that the Pasha would come up with the rascals, for they were almost sure to retire to the hills at his approach, and to stop there until he returned to Mosul, when they would go back to their old courses.

In the absence of the Pasha I paid a visit of ceremony, in company with the British consul, to the official who acted for him during his absence. He gave a very bad account of the Kurds, and laid great stress upon the fact that they would never wait at a convenient spot to be overtaken and punished by the Government troops, but would, in the most cowardly way, run back into the shelter of their hills, after robbing a caravan or a village. This habit of theirs greatly added to the difficulty of requiting their misdeeds. But the fact that they were Kurds explained everything. While walking out to the

Mosul Hyde Park the previous evening, Mr. Russell and I had been somewhat rudely passed by two soldiers of the line, one of whom then put a climax to his military swagger by impudently kicking a little dog of Mr. Russell's. The kawasses of the Consulate, who were of course in attendance, were very indignant, and belaboured both soldiers with their sticks of office, and finally reported their misconduct to a sergeant on duty at a neighbouring guard-house. The soldiers seemed greatly chop-fallen at the result of their doings; they offered no resistance to the castigation they received, and went along to the guard-house without any active opposition. This at all events showed that they were under a salutary sense of discipline, and had no notion of resisting authority when it asserted itself. They were "run in," and their conduct was reported to the acting governor. During my visit their misbehaviour was spoken of with regret, and Mr. Russell was assured that the affair would never have happened if the two soldiers had not been Kurds. If they had been Turks or Arabs they would never have thought of showing any rudeness, but what could be expected from a Kurd but boorishness? I may state here that the two Kurdish soldiers in question furnished the sole instance of incivility or rudeness towards a European or a Christian which came under my observation during the whole of my journey.

The natural resources of the Pashalik of Mosul are very great, but they are only very partially developed. The soil, though not as rich as that of the country

around Baghdad and Bussorah, is very fertile, and large tracts of it are utilized for agricultural and grazing purposes. There are mineral deposits of considerable value, and easily workable, in the mountains; an iron mine some seventy miles from the city of Mosul is spoken of as containing ore of very high quality. Some coal-mines exist, the produce of which is not, however, equal to English coal. A mine of lignite has been worked by the Turkish Government, and some of the coal deposits were at one time utilized to supply the steamers on the Tigris; but the primitive and inefficient methods of working made the out-turn so dear that coal from England has superseded the native article. The mineral wealth of the country, when properly developed under European supervision, will, no doubt, prove an inexhaustible addition to the national resources. The silver and lead deposits, and above all, those of copper, are known to be of great extent, and the ore is very rich. The Government is accused of discouraging attempts to open up mines. The obstacles thrown in the way of persons wishing to obtain concessions are vexatious, and can only be surmounted by interesting powerful officials in the success of the applicant. The law regulating mining operations is not in itself illiberal; but some of its provisions are made unfailing pretexts for interference on the part of the local officers, who must be bribed to allow the works to go on smoothly. All this is directly antagonistic to the manifest interest of the Government, and could be easily set right under the reformed Administration which the country is promised.

As summer comes on the vast flocks of sheep which graze on the plains of Northern Mesopotamia are driven across the river, over the bridge at Mosul, to the better-watered country on the eastern bank—the old Assyria. I saw them pass over the bridge one day in compact columns which seemed to have no end: I was told that they had been going over from early dawn, and would continue until evening. The toll charged was a piastre —about twopence-farthing—per score, sheep under a year old passing free. During this great annual migration mutton is very plentiful in Mosul, for sheep too tired to continue their journey are sold for two or three shillings by the Arabs or Kurds who have them in charge.

The cost of living in Mosul is absurdly low, for owing to the want of an outlet for the superabundant produce of the rich surrounding country, food almost ceases to have a money value. As much bread can be bought for about a farthing in Mosul as would cost twopence in Constantinople. The Mosul bread is made as thin as a wafer, and as tough as leather. A pile of these wafer-like loaves, each about fourteen inches in diameter, is built up to about a foot in height; and a Mosul labourer of good appetite will dispose of the whole at a meal, sour milk being his only beverage. Dates, when they are in season, form part of the diet of the population, but not to the same extent as at Baghdad, for dates have to be imported from the south; they do not grow within a hundred and fifty miles of Mosul. Onions are almost the only vegetable generally in favour, or indeed known.

One native of Mosul grows peas in his private garden from seed given to him by a European; he gives some to his friends as a wonderful rarity. As all things that grow in Europe would freely grow in the rich soil and temperate climate of this region, it is strange that garden produce is almost unknown in Mosul.

RIVERSIDE GATEWAY, MOSUL.

CHAPTER VI.

KURDISTAN.

Re-crossing the Tigris—Route of the Ten Thousand—Among the hills—Adventure with Kurds—Night in a Chaldean village—Zomail—A mountain pass—Changed aspect of the country—Zakhoo—A Kurdish town—Camels browsing—Gazelles—Ineffectual chase—Arab greyhounds—An old sergeant and his convoy—A Chaldean village—Interview with Chaldean priests—Hardships of the villagers—War contributions—Robberies by Kurds—A message for the Bishop and the Wali—Where the Ark rested—Tradition of the Kurds—Angorah goats.

On the afternoon of the 2nd of May I left Mosul *en route* for Diarbekir. The sky was covered with clouds, and showers fell at intervals. There was a southerly wind, but still the day was somewhat cold, which is an advantage when riding post. It was said that the hot weather here, as at Baghdad, was a fortnight late this season; the heats of summer usually set in about the middle of April. The horses were ferried across the river in a barge, the pontoon-bridge being removed on account of another rise of the waters of the Tigris, which showed that the snow on the uplands was melting. Starting from Nineveh, the post-track follows as far as Jezeerah the line of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, bearing

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rather to the north-east, and away from the river. The Retreat under Xenophon began at the ford over the Greater Zab, the treacherous seizure of Clearchus and the other Greek generals by Tissaphernes having been effected on the left bank of that river. The Greeks marched thence to Nimroud, eighteen miles south of Mosul, and thence past Koyunjik, over the site of Nineveh, to the north-west. We find ourselves soon riding over rolling uplands, and continually ascending. The land is very rich, and is covered for the most part with rich pasturage, on which flocks and herds graze; but there is a great extent of ploughed land awaiting seed, and much barley nearly in the ear. The ploughing is still in progress in several places.

After passing some miles to the north-west of Nineveh we find hills on the left hand as well as on the right. We are fairly entering Kurdistan, and shall for many a day to come see more of hills and valleys than of the boundless plains to which a traveller in the south becomes so accustomed. Zomail, the first post-station, is twelve hours from Mosul, and it was therefore quite impossible to reach it before nightfall. We had heard a great deal in Mosul of the Kurds, and we of course kept a sharp look out. Two zaptiehs formed my escort. The night was very dark, and as the ground was pitted with rat-holes it was unsafe to canter, and the horses went at a walk. At half-past nine o'clock, when about an hour and a half from Zomail, the zaptiehs spied three or four Kurds about fifty yards in front, and a little to the left of the track. They hailed the men, but got no answer,

which, in the Desert, invariably implies wicked designs. Caravans and honest travellers always answer a challenge, and challenge in return; robbers alone hold their tongues. The zaptiehs rode twenty yards to the left of the path, and renewed their challenge, crying "Postea" at the same time. Still no answer. The zaptiehs fired a pistol, and quick as thought came a return shot from the Kurds, not, however, from a pistol, but from a gun. The bullet passed between the zaptiehs and me. The reports, and the flashes so close at hand, made my horse plunge violently, and I was unable to get my revolver out in time to fire at the second flash, which I considered would be the proper thing to do. The zaptiehs called out that the Kurds were running over the rising ground to the left, and asked should they follow. As it was impossible to see how many rascals the Kurds might have in reserve over the rising ground, and as it was unlikely that three or four men on foot, if entirely unsupported, would have the audacity to fire upon mounted men, I thought it was better to let the affair end there in a drawn battle, and resume our journey. We went on, therefore, at a walking pace as before, with our hands on our pistols, and taking care to keep a little apart so as to give ample room for another bullet from a long gun to pass between us without hitting anybody. This open order had the advantage of making our number appear larger in the darkness than it really was. We were not molested further that evening, though we had reason to know that we were pretty closely followed.

The zaptiehs told me that there was no shelter for travellers at Zomail, and they proposed that we should go for the night to a Chaldean village about six miles from that station, and put up at the house of the headman. We accordingly left the main track, and about eleven o'clock came upon the village, a number of Kurdish watch-dogs making a frightful noise as we approached. We were hailed before we got up to the houses, and shouted "Postea!" in return. This satisfied the men who were on the watch, and we were allowed to enter the village, and go up to the headman's cottage. It was roughly built of sun-dried bricks, as we had leisure to see while arrangements were being made inside for our accommodation. The family was in bed, and while the women were getting up and dressing, a light was placed outside the door in a little shed in which we stood for shelter. We were admitted in five or ten minutes, and found the place pretty comfortable. There were two rooms, one of which was occupied by the headman and his wife, and the other by three boys, scarcely yet awake, and half-a-dozen sheep which needed shelter. In a corner of the room was a loom on which a piece of coarse cotton was being made. The boys migrated to their parents' room, and left me their apartment for the night. From the other apartment, wood to make a fire was handed to us, and, later on, bread and milk were procured from somewhere, and given to us.

After supper I lay down in a corner of the room on a thin mattress stuffed with cotton, the zaptiehs and the other two men lying on the floor near the fire. We

had scarcely fallen asleep when we were aroused by the loud barking of the dogs, and the shouting of men. There was a cry that the Kurds were on us, and we laid hold of our arms. Two shots were fired by the villagers and were not replied to. Word then came that some men had been seen approaching the village, but, on finding it on the alert, they made off. The Kurds are very faint-hearted robbers. They did not give any further trouble that night, though, being very dark and wet, it was well adapted for their purpose, if they had the courage of their calling, like the Italian brigands, for instance.

At six o'clock on the morning of the 3rd of May we rode into Zomail to change horses. The zaptiehs asked me to write a report for them to take to Mosul of what had happened with the Kurds the night before. I wrote accordingly to Mr. Russell, the Vice-Consul, so that he might mention the matter to the Turkish authorities. The morning was bright and cold, a north wind blowing. Our route lay over grass and arable land, on which stones and even boulders were conspicuous at intervals. The valley got more and more elevated as we proceeded, hills rising on either hand. We now approached the hills on our right; and, after getting over seven hours' distance, we turned into those hills, and began the ascent of a long and difficult pass, which it took us an hour to traverse.

When we got to the summit of the pass we saw the higher Kurdish hills within fifteen miles of us, their sides and summits covered with dazzling snow. Until now

we had not seen a single tree or bush in all the country since leaving Mosul. But on the northern side of the hills we were crossing there were trees and many bushes of a kind I had never seen before. At the highest point of the pass there is a large circular vault with a flight of steps by which people can descend to the bottom. There was no water in it, and, from its situation, it could not well have been intended as a cistern for water. The zaptiehs could not give any account of it; it had been always there, they said, and no one knew what it was for. It differed from the rock-cut tombs I saw afterwards near Orfah, as there were no recesses in which to deposit the dead.

On the northern side of the pass we found ourselves in a country wearing a very different aspect to that we had been hitherto passing through. There was no longer any reminiscence whatever of the tropics; nothing that suggested heat or danger from the sun. It was not merely that snow covered all the hills which were close at hand on our right, and in front, but the vegetation was deficient in luxuriance, and had a hardy and often a pinched look which told of the bitter winds and frozen air of winter, which here seemed to linger in the lap of May. As we descended the pass, we found shrubs and flowers looking just like those of early spring in England. In the plain, vegetation seemed somewhat more advanced, and as we approached the Kurdish town of Zakhoo, we passed hawthorns of large size, in full blossom.

The town of Zakhoo is a place of some importance,

and in general aspect differs greatly from those south of Mosul. The houses are for the most part built of stone instead of mud, though sun-dried brick is not unknown. The rooms open on the street, and the women carry on their household avocations in full view of the passers-by. The veil appears to be despised, and the female face is not ashamed to be seen. All this gives the town and population a quasi-European air. Both men and women love colour in their dress, and in the adornment of their houses. The ample trousers of the men are striped with red or yellow; and this, with their short jackets, gives them somewhat the air of Spanish muleteers in an opera. The houses are gay with paint and colour. Altogether Zakhoo seemed quite a bright, cheerful place by comparison with other towns of the same class, where a dingy mud-colour prevailed over all and saddened the soul. A mine of lignite is worked by the Government at no great distance from this town.

After a brief stay we bade adieu to Zakhoo, crossing the Chabour, a deep river which flows near it, and pushed on to the Christian village of Nahirwan, half way between Zakhoo and Jezeerah.

On this part of the route we came frequently upon large herds of camels browsing at large over the rich herbage. These were of course private property, but no one was ever in sight looking after them, and it would not be difficult to steal them. The difficulty would be, doubtless, in getting them away to a part of the country where they could not be found and identified by their owners, for a camel could not be made to quicken his

pace by any amount of urging. Thirty or forty camels grazing form a picturesque group in the landscape. Every few miles there are vast fields of thistles of great size, and I had almost said beauty, which the camels luxuriate on in spite of the Scottish motto. I had no idea that thistles could grow to such a height, and form jungles dense as those which nature has scattered with lavish hand over parts of this region. A patriotic Scotchman would be well repaid for the trouble of a journey to southern Kurdistan by the sight of his national emblem flourishing on so grand a scale.

In the evening, while we were still some miles from the village of Nahirwan, riding along a valley some six or eight miles in width, we observed a number of gazelles—about a dozen—crossing from the hills on our left to those on the right. They saw us approaching, and stood still to watch our movements. Observing this, we slackened our pace so as not to alarm them, while one of the zaptiehs made a circuit to cut them off from the hills to which they were going, and turn them back in our direction, so that we might intercept them. For a few moments it seemed as if this manœuvre would succeed, for the gazelles showed a most unexpected amount of confidence in the honesty of our intentions, and allowed us to slowly gain upon them till they were almost within gun shot. We got out our pistols and prepared for action, when they happened to espy the zaptieh who was moving to get between them and the northern hills. In an instant they bounded off at a speed that left his horse, Arab as it was, nowhere. The

zaptieh did not like to give up his chance of a roast gazelle for supper, and he rode hard for fully a mile to turn the gazelles, but all his efforts were unavailing. Once alarmed, the gazelle is not to be overtaken in fair chase by anything on four legs.

Kurds and Arabs hunt the gazelle with greyhounds, and the sport is held in high repute. I saw some begs one morning going out, accompanied by their dogs, of which they took great care. Each greyhound had a little coat, gay with scarlet edges, to keep him warm in the cold morning air. The hounds were not so large or so fierce-looking as those of Western Europe, but they are incomparably more symmetrical and graceful, and their big lustrous eyes almost rival those of the gazelle itself. These are the Arab greyhounds; there is another breed—the Persian—which is said to be larger and more capable of enduring bad weather and hard work. As the great speed of the gazelle renders it impossible to run it down if once it gets a fair start, stratagem is always employed in approaching it. Some of the sportsmen allow themselves to be seen, and endeavour to occupy the attention of the gazelles, whose failing is curiosity, while the others, profiting by any irregularity of the ground, steal upon them unawares, holding the dogs in leash. When within a reasonable distance they let the dogs slip, and the gazelles, bewildered by the unexpected attack in a direction different from that which they were scrutinizing, cannot at once make up their minds which way to fly. The dogs make the most of the brief opportunity, and a

gazelle is killed. If the ground has been softened by a heavy shower of rain the gazelles are very much at the mercy of the dogs, for their hard hoofs sink deep into the earth at every bound, while the pad of the dog's foot rests lightly on the surface, and enables him to make running while the poor gazelle is extricating its legs.

As we journeyed along we met a caravan, consisting of two or three Kurds, with eight laden camels, under the escort not of an ordinary zaptieh, but of a sergeant of the line, a fine-looking old soldier with grizzled moustache and a silver medal on his breast, his uniform nearly worn out in the war. No doubt the property he was guarding was being sent eastward for some Government department. It seemed strange that eight camel-loads of goods should be deemed sufficiently protected by one soldier, even though he was a *vieux moustache.* I noticed that he was armed with a Winchester rifle, nearly new, and he showed it to me readily. It was of American make, and fired seventeen bullets without reloading. I heard afterwards that a good sprinkling of the troops at Plevna were provided with this magnificent weapon, and that they contributed in no small degree to the enormous losses which the Russians sustained when advancing to the different assaults. The Martini-Henry, admirable as it is, requires to be loaded after every discharge, and that operation, however simple, takes time; but the Winchester, once levelled over the entrenchment, sends forth a continuous stream of bullets, against which nothing living can stand. From all I heard in Constantinople from people who had seen its

performances in action I came to the conclusion that the Winchester has a great future before it.

We arrived at the considerable village of Nahirwan, in the evening, and were very well received by the kahia, or headman. Two Chaldean priests came and visited me, as I sat in front of the headman's house. They were simple-minded, honest-looking fellows enough, but were evidently quite illiterate, and were little better than the ordinary run of villagers in appearance and manners. They kissed my hand with respect, and could scarcely be induced to sit down beside me; but after a time their timidity wore off and they conversed sensibly enough. But they knew little beyond the politics of the village and its relations with the Kurds of the neighbouring mountains. I asked them about the division in their Church and the Papal Bull which was setting the Chaldeans in Mosul by the ears. They seemed to know nothing about it. When asked who would be the new Patriarch, they said they did not know—the Pope would send one from "Rouma." Seeing that even the famous Bull of 1869 leaves the Chaldean bishops the right of electing the Patriarch, and that the ancient usage of the Church gave the right of election to the bishops in accord with the clergy and laity, this piece of information showed how little the priests in the Chaldean villages know of things ecclesiastical. They seemed wretchedly poor, their black coats, or rather, gowns, being worn threadbare, and in places patched with cloth of a different colour. The villagers seemed to pay them no particular respect, looking on them apparently as not

very superior in any respect to themselves. It is impossible that men of that grade, as ignorant as the rest of the community, can exercise any marked influence for good over their flocks. The priests of the Nestorians, the Jacobites, and the Syriac Christians are even less cultivated, as a class, than those of the Chaldeans, who are the best, or rather, the least ignorant of those of all the native Churches.

I purchased a small sheep for six shillings, and it was killed for dinner, which was on a scale of unusual grandeur that evening. The banquet over, the headman and his elders and the priests drew round in a circle, and seating themselves on the ground, proceeded to tell me of the misfortunes they had experienced during the previous two years since the Government had commenced to send troops from Arabistan to the seat of war in Europe and in Armenia. "Until then," said the kahia, a sober-minded old man, of fine appearance, with a long beard not yet wholly gray, "we were well enough off, but now we are nearly ruined. While the war was going on soldiers were always passing through, and they used to be quartered on us for the night. They made us give them bread, and barley, and ghee, and they even took our sheep."

"But I suppose you were paid, at all events in paper money?" I said.

"No," said all together, "they never paid us for anything!"

"Well," said I, "then you would soon have nothing left, if many soldiers were quartered on you?"

"We were nearly ruined;" said the kahia, "for never a month passed but the place was full of soldiers, and whatever we had stored we had to give. A number of people were ruined altogether, and when they had nothing to live on, they left the village, and their houses are there now empty—the Beg can see them for himself."

They showed me several houses—by no means the meanest in this large village—which were unoccupied, and beginning already to fall to pieces. I inquired whether this state of things had not improved since the cessation of the war.

"We are no better off," said the headman, "for when the soldiers stopped coming, the Kurds came down from the hills and plundered us worse than ever. They would come in and ask for three sheep or six sheep, and for corn, and one thing and another, and if anybody refused, they would kill him; so they had to get what they wanted, and we have now scarcely anything at all. If this goes on, we will all have to run away and leave our houses, like the other people."

"That is a very bad state of things," said I; "but why do you not ask the Government people to keep the Kurds away from you?"

"What would be the use? They would do nothing. All the soldiers are away, and the Kurds do what they like."

"But there are zaptiehs," I insisted. "You see I was able to get two to keep the Kurds away from me when going along the road."

"The Beg is a rich man and can pay the zaptiehs, and he can speak to the pasha and get things done; but we are poor men. When the zaptiehs come they want things for nothing, for they get no pay themselves, so that we are better without them."

"Have you to pay the taxes all the same?" I inquired.

"Government is always coming to us for more," answered one of the elders. "No one ever saw the like of it before. No sooner is one thing paid than we are forced to pay something else. It is as bad as the soldiers during the war."

"Were the taxes heavy before the war broke out?"

"They were, but we could pay them somehow; but now they take everything: the Kurds and the zaptiehs and the tax-gatherers will leave us nothing. If this goes on, we will all have to go somewhere and beg."

The two priests at this stage of the conversation had a conversation in an undertone with the headman and one or two others of the laity. Then one of them asked me if I was not going to Jezeerah. I said that I was going there next day. "Well," said the priest, "there is only one house at Jezeerah fit for a Beg to put up at. It is the bishop's new house, a fine place, better than any in Nahirwan. The bishop is a very good man, and he will be glad if you stay with him."

I said, I should be very glad to make the good bishop's acquaintance, and asked his name.

"He is Bishop Mathurin," the priest returned. He was educated in Frangistan, and is very clever and

learned. If you go to him and tell him about the way we are treated, he may do something for us."

I asked what a bishop could do in the matter?

"He may be able to get the pasha to tell the tax people not to take anything more from us, and to stop the Kurds from ruining us altogether."

I said I would be sure to state to the bishop all I had seen and heard at Nahirwan, and that assurance seemed to give the little conclave great satisfaction.

After a pause the kahia asked whether I was not going to Diarbekir.

I said that I would no doubt stop a day or two in that city, if I went westward instead of turning north-east at Jezeerah for Lake Van.

"They say," said the kahia, "that the wali is a just man, and does not wish the people to be treated as we are. If the Beg would tell him about what we are suffering, he might send word that we should be made all right. Who knows? Perhaps it would be God's will! If the Beg will say a word for us to the wali himself?"

I promised that if I had an opportunity I would do so. The elders and the priests thanked me with great warmth, and in spite of my reluctance, touched my hands, and kissed their own hands thereafter, as a sign of gratitude and respect.

Near Nahirwan is to be seen, on one of the higher hills on the right, the identical spot on which, according to the tradition of these parts, Noah's ark rested after the Deluge. The Mussulman surajee, or horse-keeper,

told me of this first as we went along, and I afterwards found that the Jews and the Christians of the surrounding country also believe in this mountain and not in Ararat, which is too far to the north, and quite away from the plain of Shinar, into which Noah descended after the Deluge. The plain of Shinar lies due east of this mountain, and Noah and the animals which had been preserved in the ark could easily have passed into that plain from its not very precipitous sides. Another point: the dove brought back an olive-branch when sent forth from the ark. There are plenty of olive-trees in this region, but few so far north as Ararat. The surajee told me that at night the planks of the ark shine like fire, and the nails can be seen like little flames. This statement, I confess, a little staggered me, but I learned shortly afterwards that there was—as there usually is—a fact behind what appeared to be a purely fanciful belief. The Moslems have a small mosque on the summit of the mountain, and in the month of July, when pilgrims repair to it, they keep a fire burning all night. The flames appear to the eye of faith to be the planks of the ark shining through the darkness.

I was unable to get a piece of the wood of the ark, of which a considerable quantity is found every year by the devotees, and brought away as most precious relics. The pieces are for the most part bits of the planking of the vessel, and some are whitish-grey and others almost black; the nail-holes are distinctly traceable in them. They are covered with a substance resembling tar. One of the Kurdish tribes holds that it is descended from

Sennacherib, the remains of whose palace we looked in upon at Nineveh. These Kurds have a tradition that the king, their ancestor, had Divine service performed on this mountain in memory of the ark. To perpetuate the example, they go to the mountain every year, towards the end of June, and spend the day in devotional exercises, holding in their hands lighted torches. It is generally from these descendants of Sennacherib that the pieces of the ark are to be obtained, of course for a consideration. The altar which Noah built on coming out of the ark is to be seen near the foot of the mountain; it consists of four stone pillars. Noah is said to have been buried somewhere close at hand, but the exact spot is apparently yet to be discovered. As for the mountain itself, it is square-shaped, about five thousand feet high, and its flat top, when I passed it, was covered with snow. It stands a little apart from other mountains of somewhat similar formation, but in the same line with those on the northern side of a long valley.

At daybreak on the 4th of May we left Nahirwan for Jezeerah. The scenery was interesting, and the route very good, chiefly over grass land on which large flocks of sheep were grazing. As we were galloping along in one place where there were low shrubs intermingled with the high grass, my horse came upon a young Kurd, who was lying asleep, and only avoided trampling on him by jumping over him. This awoke the gentle shepherd, who started up greatly frightened, but was reassured when we laughed at him. Besides the sheep, he was tending a score of Angora goats, every pound of whose

long silky fleece sells even at Baghdad for three shillings. The young Kurd very readily milked one of these goats to give me a drink, and he refused to take any backsheesh for his trouble. I was told that it was unusually late in the season for these goats to be still in the valleys; they are, as a rule, driven to the hills as soon as the snow begins to melt, for they do not thrive in the valleys when the spring advances. The breed deteriorates and dies out when taken to countries where snow cannot be found on the hills nearly all the year round; a certain degree of cold is apparently necessary to the growth of the valuable fleece.

CHAPTER VII.

THE KURDS AND THE VILLAGERS.

Jezeerah—The Chaldean Bishop—Unhealthiness of the present site of the town—A good proposal—Kurdish outrages—Supineness of the local officials—Plea of the Kurds—Levying their arrears—A sergeant of zaptiehs—A madman armed—Dangerous bridge—Mussulman village—Inhospitable Kurds—Christian and Moslem hosts—Deroona—No zaptiehs—Extortinate demand—A dishonest Kahia—Complaints of villagers *en route*—A Syrian Christian—A ruined Kurd—His sad story—The conscription—A Mussulman grievance—Nisibin—A Turkish officer—Patriotic pride of the Turks—The Circassians—Colony at Ras el Ain—Misdeeds of the colonists—Trade in Circassian girls—Circassian Pashas.

We arrived at Jezeerah at nine o'clock in the morning, and found it to be a place in evident decadence. It consists of some three hundred houses, but the remains of buildings of considerable size show that it was once a large and important city. We had been riding over uplands almost all the way from Mosul, and now, to descend to the level of the Tigris once more, we had to lead our horses down precipitous paths into the plain in which Jezeerah stands. There is a single arch of an old Roman bridge still standing, about a mile and a half from the spot on which the present town is huddled, in a position which keeps from it any possible breeze, the

surrounding hills completely land-locking it. Where the Roman bridge spanned the Tigris, the ancient city no doubt stood, and there it must have been comparatively healthy, for the hills do not shut that site in.

Having crossed the river in a barge, an operation which took some time, we at once proceeded to Bishop Mathurin's house. He was out on business, but his servant bade me enter and make myself at home. The house was the best I had seen since leaving Mosul, the Bishop having just added a large reception room to the old episcopal residence, which was simply a good-sized cottage. It was very sparingly furnished, which was wise, for the Kurds would probably have helped themselves to anything of much value. A couple of strips of Persian carpet on the floor of the principal room had been carried off by them a short time before my arrival, and were only recovered after much negotiation between the Kurds and the local authorities.

When the Bishop came in he welcomed me to his place very cordially, and ordered luncheon. The meal consisted of the very simplest fare, the host apologizing therefor on the ground that he, like every one else, was now so poor that it was a question of getting anything to live on at all. I had a broken fork, while the Bishop ate with his fingers, *à la Turque*. The Kurds, he said, had taken all his other forks, and nearly all his spoons, and they would have taken the fork given to me as a guest if it had not, fortunately, been too damaged to be worth carrying away.

This Chaldean Bishop is a native of Mosul; he was

educated in Europe, and is much more European than oriental in his manners and ideas. He speaks French and Italian, and has quite a little library of books in those languages, and some in Latin, Chaldean, and Arabic. A copy of the scriptures in the Chaldean language, transcribed by a Chaldean Bishop, who finished his laborious task, as he curiously states on the fly-leaf, "in the month of Ramadan, in the year of Hejira 700," is the gem of this library, which, though small, is one not unworthy of a Christian bishop in such a remote and troubled see. Bishop Mathurin found the book in the hands of a little Christian girl, who was playing with it in the streets. He took it from her, and gave her another copy of the Scriptures in its place. In some Arabic annals at the end of the transcribed scriptures, it is stated that in the year 1006 there was a famine and pestilence in Jezeerah, and that one hundred persons a day died during the months of April, May and June. It is certain that Jezeerah must have been a large and populous city at that time to bear so great a loss. A mortality of a hundred a day now would not leave a soul in the place in three weeks.

Jezeerah is so centrally situated, that it ought to be always a place of great importance. The distance to Trebezonde is only fifteen days, and the routes from Mosul to Diarbekir, and from those cities to Erzeroum and Kars, and by Lake Van to Bayazid and Erivan pass through it. But it is apparently in process of final extinction. This is partly caused by the depredations of the Kurds and the Arabs, and partly by the insalu-

brity of the present site during the summer months. The marshes close by are very pestilential, and, as already mentioned, the hills around it are so near, and so steep and overhanging, that the heat becomes intolerable, and predisposes to fever. The Bishop proposed to the Governor that the present site should be abandoned, and the town shifted to the neighbourhood of the Roman arch, where there are no marshes, and the hills do not prevent free ventilation. The Pasha said that the operation would cost a great deal of money. "Not so," said the Bishop; "you have only to build the Government offices there, and go and live there yourself, offering sites gratuitously along lines which should be properly traced, so as to secure drainage and ventilation. The inhabitants will put the stones of their present one-storey houses on Kelleks, and float them down to the new site."

The Bishop's project was not carried out, and the people are dying off or migrating. The walls of the town are in ruins, and no longer keep out even the Kurds. They come in at night and rob houses with impunity. In the beginning of last spring they robbed the Chaldean church of the altar plate, carpets, and everything that could be easily carried off. The Government succeeded in recovering the carpets, which were bulky, but nothing else. Later on, when I got to Mardin, I heard that the missing plate had been offered for sale in that town, and was believed to be still there.

I told Bishop Mathurin what I had heard at Nahirwan, and he said that it was the same story with all

the villages around. The Kurds were harrassing them beyond endurance, and if it continued, the country would be depopulated. He had represented this to the authorities, but their answer was always, "We have no troops! What can we do?" There was a great deal of truth in that; the troops had been all sent to the seat of war, and there were only some zaptiehs left, and they were not of very much use, for they were not properly organized and directed. The Governor-General of Diarbekir was a very energetic man, and most anxious to protect the people; but when he telegraphed orders to the subordinates, they said, as usual, "What can we do without troops?" With a little energy and good-will, it appeared to me, from all I heard and saw, that a good deal might be done even with the means at hand.

But there is a general chorus of complaint about the inertness and venality of the subordinate officials. The energetic words addressed by Queen Elizabeth to the baffled administrators of her Grace's Irish affairs could be with perfect justice addressed to these apathetic Turkish officials: "By God's death you are all idle knaves, or worse!" I found nearly everywhere that the higher officials were, on the whole, well spoken of; but the subordinates were regarded with dislike and suspicion. They are not actuated by any high sentiment of public duty, and being for the most part either inadequately paid or altogether unpaid by the Government, they will do nothing for which they are not paid by others. Add to this, that as a class they have never

been trained to the business of the offices they hold, and that their tenure is altogether insecure, and we need not wonder at the general absence of efficiency and honesty which characterizes them.

I asked Bishop Mathurin whether the Christian villagers only were molested by the Kurds, and he informed me that they robbed and oppressed the Mussulmans as well, but only when there was some special ground of quarrel with them. The Christians they regarded as fair game, merely as Christians; no cause of quarrel was required. The sympathy arising from a community of religious belief prevents their being so hard on the Mussulman villagers against whom there is no special grudge. "Really," said the Bishop, "I wonder that the Kurds do not work more harm than they do, for they have it in their own hands to do what they like. There is nothing to stop them, and it must be said that, on the whole, they are moderate in their exactions, for they take but a part when they might take everything."

I asked what was the reason why they troubled themselves to observe moderation in their levying of blackmail.

"Well," said Bishop Mathurin, "we know something of their chiefs and men who have influence over them, and by a little management, by presents and promises, and by persuasion, we keep them very often from going to extremities."

I may mention here that the Kurds in their exactions allege that they have a right to tribute from the

villages in the valleys along the southern spurs of the mountains of Kurdistan. In one instance they cleared out sixty villages altogether, excusing or justifying themselves by saying that the Turkish Government had kept them by force from levying their dues for twenty years past, and that now that the troops were withdrawn they wanted to collect the arrears all at once. As a rule, they do not completely clear out a village; they demand half-a-dozen sheep or a couple of cows, and a certain quantity of barley, and when their demands are complied with, they remain satisfied for a little time, or until the supply obtained is exhausted. Arabs, when they plunder a village, are much more thorough in their ways; they take everything, and leave the inhabitants utterly ruined.

As I still had a strong desire to make my way to Constantinople through Armenia and Asia Minor, if possible, I inquired again at Jezeerah whether the routes were practicable; I learned that the snow was still in some of the passes, but that difficulty might be surmounted. The route was not, however, to be thought of, for the villages by Lake Van were ruined, and there was neither food for the traveller nor forage for his horse: The country was in a state bordering on famine, and disbanded soldiers were robbing on the highways to get the means of subsistence. This finally put an end to all idea of getting to Constantinople by Asia Minor, and decided me to go to Diarbekir, *en route* for Aleppo and Scanderoon.

The worthy Bishop pressed me to stay for a day or two

at Jezeerah, but I was unable to spare the time. I sent to the Kaimacham early for zaptiehs, and a message was returned that they should be ready at one o'clock. When that hour came there were no zaptiehs, and I therefore proceeded to the place where the governor was to be found. His residence and offices are in the remains of a very fine old castle, probably Roman, and I was asked to walk into a room where the governor was seated on a divan, with half-a-dozen of the principal officials and citizens of Jezeerah. After the usual salutations and coffee and cigars, I gently broke the news to him that the zaptiehs he had directed to be ready for me at one o'clock were not forthcoming. He seemed not to be in the least surprised or annoyed, but said he would order them again. A sergeant of zaptiehs was sent for and told to get ready the men to escort me to Deroona, a station twelve hours distant. The sergeant looked like an old soldier, and I thought he would know how to obey so distinct an order given by the Kaimacham himself in his office, and, as it were, *ex cathedrâ*. I therefore thanked the Kaimacham and left his presence to have a look at the town and the ruins. There are several ruins of great size, one of them apparently the remains of a palace, and the others of castles or redoubts which strengthened the walls when it was a city of great importance. Some of the finest of these are in course of demolition, to furnish stone for the construction of houses which are little better than hovels. An old soldier who came with us to the different places of interest, said that when he was a boy some of the buildings

which are disappearing were intact and even occupied. But the whole place is now going to ruin.

Having inspected the whole place in a leisurely manner, I sent to inquire whether the zaptiehs were ready. Word was brought that they were waiting for me in the bazaar, and thither I went. I found one zaptieh, and the sergeant told me with great coolness that there were no more.

I saw at least half-a-dozen smoking in a coffee-shop, and I asked the sergeant what he meant by saying that there was only one in Jezeerah?

As usual, he answered by a question, "Of what use is a zaptieh without a horse? The horses of these men are out at grass."

This absurd excuse not satisfying me, I sent the dragoman to the Kaimacham, who repeated his order. The sergeant said that the Kaimacham had only ordered one zaptieh to accompany me—an assertion which led to a terrific altercation between him and the dragoman, who was afraid I would fancy that he had badly interpreted the Kaimacham's words. A large crowd gathered round, and appeared much interested in the quarrel. With some difficulty I made the dragoman hold his tongue, and then when silence was obtained, I got him to interpret to the sergeant a statement and a question.

"The Kaimacham ordered you to send three zaptiehs with me; do you refuse to obey that order? If you do, say so!"

The sergeant grew suddenly calm when the matter was thus put to him, and said that in half an hour the

three zaptiehs should be forthcoming. The attentive crowd grinned at this sudden surrender on his part, and to give emphasis to the promise as to time, I pulled out my watch and noted the hour. Not to be behindhand with me, he too pulled out a watch, quite as good as my own, but how obtained goodness only knows, and gave me to understand that he too was a man who knew the value of minutes.

I then sat down in front of a coffee-house and had some unsweetened coffee, thick and slab and bitter. The crowd lingered about, and presently there stepped up to me and tapped me on the shoulder, a wild-looking man, carrying a short pike in his hands, and a wonderful assortment of yataghans and daggers in his girdle. He said something in Kurdish, which, of course, I did not understand, but I knew by his expression that he was a lunatic, who was much struck at seeing a barbarian from the outer world in the streets of Jezeerah. I gave him a friendly nod to show him that for my part I saw no ground for quarrel between us, but he seemed greatly exercised at the sight of me. The people about I suppose noticed his disquiet, and they very good-naturedly tapped him in his turn on the shoulder to attract, or rather to distract his attention, and then gently hustled him away from me and kept him at the outside of the group. He soon afterwards went his way singing and clinking the end of his pike on the stones. There are no lunatic asylums in this part of the world, and therefore we must take it as a matter of course that the lunatics wander at large at their own sweet will. But

it is certainly to be regretted that the charity of the benevolent should display itself in presenting to lunatics a complete set of deadly weapons. The pike and the side-arms of this Jezeerah madman were all well made and in good order, and must have been the gift of people of some means.

At the expiration of the stipulated half-hour a zaptieh rode up, making only two, ready to accompany me. Upon this breach of the understanding I got up, and mounting, declared I would ride back to the Kaimacham, and bring the obstinate serjeant to book. The sergeant was at hand, however, and finding that I was as obstinate as himself, and would have my three zaptiehs, he declared that the three men were ready for me, for he was coming himself; he was the third.

We therefore set out, and the first operation to be effected was the crossing of a bridge over the Tigris, for apparently, what we had crossed in the morning was only a branch of that river; and to do this, we had to dismount and lead our horses. Two of the arches had fallen in, and long and now quite rotten beams had been placed from pier to pier, and across the beams were laid rough planks and branches of trees, not fastened in any particular manner. Each cavalier had to lead his horse over alone, for if two horses got upon the ricketty timbers together, their joint weight would certainly bring about a catastrophe. As a further precaution, the cavalier went well in front of his horse, holding the reins at their greatest length, so that if the horse fell through the man might have a chance of not going

down to perdition with him. Nothing could be easier than to repair this bridge and make it perfectly safe, for the old piers are solid enough to carry the girders of a railway; but it evidently has existed more or less in its present state for years, and will so continue until the rotten beams and the crazy planks upon them fall into the Tigris.

After passing the bridge, we pushed on amongst hills, the path once more being upward. As we had lost much time, and past experience proved that it was not safe travelling in these parts by night, I wished to move on rapidly to the village where we were to halt. The sergeant laid hold of this pretext to declare that as I wanted to gallop the whole way—which was not strictly true—he would go back, for he would not have his horse killed. I was glad to get rid of him, and saw him turn back with pleasure. At six o'clock we came to a village which the zaptiehs said was the proper one to stop at for the night. It was a Mussulman village, and the men were all absent. The women were fine strapping dames of Kurdish blood, and not in the least ashamed to be seen unveiled. We intimated our desire to stop in the village for the night, but each and all of them flatly refused to let us into their houses, or, indeed, to come near them. They stood at their doors laughing at our discomfiture as we turned from one inhospitable house to the other. At last, one woman, unable to resist the promise of payment, consented to our occupying for the night a space within the walled enclosure round her house. That the spot in question was without a roof or

shelter of any kind was nothing, but it was filthy, and could not easily be cleaned, and it was exposed to visits from thieves as well as dogs during the night. I said it was impossible to stop there and the party should push on for Deroona. The zaptiehs flatly refused to go further. They even refused to stop at this Mussulman village, and said that their duty was done—they had seen me to the next station to Jezeerah, and would now go back. I told them that if they went back I would not give them a farthing; but that if they went on I would pay them double. They had taken their tone from the sergeant, and back to Jezeerah they went. How hopeless it must be for the poor and friendless villager to look to such men for protection against Kurds or other evil-doers! But these Jezeerah zaptiehs were exceptionally wilful and insubordinate, a fact that was no doubt due to the manifest feebleness of the Kaimacham, whose orders they, or, at all events their sergeant, openly disregarded.

It was quite impossible to pass the night in the exposed yard which was placed at our disposal at this most inhospitable village. We might be murdered in our "beds" before morning, for all the wild Kurds in the neighbourhood could approach the place unperceived, and it was clear that the villagers, judging by the women, would be too churlish to give us any assistance. After some bargaining, we got one of the housewives to sell us some milk, and when we paid her handsomely for the favour, she told us that there was a zaptieh somewhere in the neighbourhood who was going to the village

of Krelani, and no doubt he would show us the way there. This zaptieh, who was feeding his horse in a field a mile or so distant, was sent for, and he proved a decent sort of fellow, and promised to see us to the village safe, and to stop the night with us there. It is not considered altogether prudent to trust one's self to the honour of some of the Kurdish villagers near the line of travel; the presence of a zaptieh or two is useful to remind the head-men that the traveller is more or less under special government protection.

We found the village of Krelani to be one of considerable size; the inhabitants being half Christian and half Mohammedan. Religious differences seemed to be completely disregarded, Christian and Moslem being on the most friendly terms. The chief men of both sections were sitting in a little circle in front of the kahia's house when we arrived, and they rose and saluted me very civilly. They at once said that we could have provisions and forage for the horses, and that they would make a place for the party to sleep in. But it turned out that all the houses were full, and it was therefore proposed that I should sleep on the flat roof of the head-man's house. To this I had no reasonable objection to offer, and I went on the roof to see whether it was sufficiently solid to bear the weight. It was very ricketty, yielding unpleasantly to every step; but some of the villagers suggested that a door should be laid on the strongest part of it, and that when that was done I could sleep on the door in full security. This plan was carried out, and on the door I spent the night, the saddle and saddle-bags being so

placed as to keep off the wind. The dragoman, the surajee, and the zaptieh passed the night on a neighbouring roof, which seemed a little more solid than that of the head-man. Sleeping on the roof in these villages has one great advantage—it places the weary traveller above the level of straying cattle and horses and out of the way of truculent village dogs. Some hundreds of sheep and goats were folded in the village street, or rather, between the houses, for of anything like a regular street Krelani could not boast; and they seemed to be on very bad terms with the dogs, little stampedes occurring during the night, followed by much discordant barking. Some of the goats, to get out of harm's way, jumped upon the roofs, and I had to use the whip to keep them from mounting upon my door to look down at the disturbances between the sheep and the dogs below. This considerably interfered with the night's repose; but, for all that, I often slept less on a better bed.

At daybreak on the 5th May the whole village was up and about. We got a supply of fresh milk and bread and eggs for breakfast, and while making a hurried meal, watched the women churning in the fashion of the country. All the milk, while yet warm, is poured into large sheep-skins, which are suspended from poles forming a rough framework. The women rock the sheep-skins backwards and forwards just as if they were rocking a swinging cot, the swish, swish of the milk goes on for half or three-quarters of an hour, and the butter is made. The buttermilk forms the chief

beverage of the country-people. The butter is clarified, and in the form of ghee it lasts for an indefinite period, and is either consumed in the villages or taken into the towns and sold.

At five o'clock I started for Deroona, a post station. Nearly all the regular stages between Mosul and Diarbekir are twelve hours long, and it is advisable to get over either a stage and a half or two stages in the day. If the horses are good—as they are once in a way—this is easily done; when they are bad, as they generally are, it is a dreadful labour to do even the twelve hours. Still the ground must be got over whether the horses are good or bad; there is no help for it.

In this part of Kurdistan the track is often very bad. Nearly all the way from Jezeerah to Deroona and beyond, the rich red soil is covered closely with stones, boulders, which must weigh on an average a hundred or a hundred and fifty pounds each. How they came there no one can tell. The Sanjar Hills on the south and the higher Kurdish hills on the north have, no doubt, each contributed their quota, but how they were brought down from the sides of the mountains and evenly spread over the level plain for league upon league no one can say. They lie very close together, grass growing in the interstices. The horses pick their way laboriously along between the stones for about thirty miles altogether. It would be easy enough to make a tolerable road by simply removing the stones out of a track some six or eight feet wide, but no one takes the trouble to do it.

In one of the hills here there is a coal-mine which was worked by the Turkish Government until the late war broke out. The coal was sent to the Tigris, and used on board the government steamers. The works were still closed when I was passing through.

The village of Deroona, where we arrived before nine o'clock in the morning, is a post station, but it is a wretched place, the houses or hovels being little better than mere heaps of rough stones thrown together without care or thought. The Kurds who inhabit it have a very sinister look, and the fact that the men were all at home when we arrived—at an hour when, if they had any honest avocation, they would be out in the fields at work—was in itself a bad sign. The zaptieh who had come with us so far now said he should return to the village of Krelani, and there was no one to replace him at Deroona. We asked some of the people about whether the road to Nisibin was safe, and they said they did not know. We had reason to believe that it was by no means safe; and I hoped that by pushing on while it was yet early, we might get to Nisibin without being molested. But the dragoman objected to setting out without an escort, and proposed that I should hire some of the idlers about Deroona to come with us to the next village, after which, from all we could learn, the way would be tolerably safe. I did not like the look of our proposed guardians, but I told him to open negotiations on the subject. Four men said they would come half way to Nisibin for a sum equivalent to eight shillings a-piece. I made this ex-

tortionate demand a pretext for refusing to have anything to do with them, and told the dragoman to say that I wanted no one to protect me on the road, for I could defend myself. I thereupon cleaned my revolver with much circumstance, and taking out the six bullets, put them in again one by one, so as to let everybody see that they were really there. This operation greatly interested the Kurds, and one, or two came near to over look it, and possibly to make a snatch at the weapon; but Yusef made them stand back, reproaching them for their rudeness in coming too close to a Beg. That work over, there was a difficulty about horses. The kahia of the village was the contractor for the twelve hours' postal distance to Nisibin, but he was in no hurry to supply horses. I had to unfold my official documents, which were of ample size, and make him look at the Arabic letters, which to him were hieroglyphics, to impress him with a sense of the danger of refusing the horses which several pashas had directed should be supplied. After vexatious delays, and much haggling, he sent somewhere into "the desert" for the animals, and we thought all was right.

But when the horses came, a difficulty arose about the receipt; he insisted upon being paid, but he excused himself from giving an acknowledgment on the ground that he could not sign his name. This was a transparent subterfuge, because all he had to do was to affix his seal to a piece of paper, and every man in the country carries a seal. No one thinks of signing his name; he simply blackens the seal with a thick kind of

ink, and affixes it to whatever paper or document he means to be bound by. But this dishonest kahia doggedly refused to affix his seal to anything, and I paid the money—twenty-three beshlecks and two cowries, about a pound sterling—into his hand, coin by coin, before all the village, for I suspected that some trick was intended. And the event proved that I was right in my suspicion, for when we got to Nisibin, the surajee asked to be paid for the horses for half the distance, saying that I had paid only for six hours of the road. I had to threaten to hand him over to the authorities at Nisibin, to be dealt with for attempted fraud, before he saw fit to discontinue pressing his fictitious claim. This was the only instance of open dishonesty which came under my observation during my expedition. As a rule, a bargain once made was strictly adhered to, and no imposition was even attempted.

On the way to Nisibin from Deroona villages are almost continuously in sight. The country is fairly cultivated, a large acreage bearing grain-crops or just ready for the seed. The soil is for the most part of a deep red colour, evidently ferruginous, and is very fertile.

At a village half way between Deroona and Nisibin, the inhabitants, Mussulman and Christian, spoke very bitterly of the depredations of the Kurds. Men from the mountains constantly came to the village and said they wanted sheep or barley, and they insisted upon getting what they asked for. The Moslems and Christians appeared to be very good friends at this village,

and to be on terms of complete equality. They both complained of the depredations of the Kurds as those of a common enemy. There were no zaptiehs stationed there to protect the village; but some stopped for a night when passing to or fro. The Kurds did not come when the zaptiehs were there; they came at other times, fifteen or twenty together, and armed so that they could not be resisted. They would kill people if they were refused what they wanted.

An hour further on, we came to a village inhabited exclusively by Christians. The elder, who came out to receive me, was much hurt when I asked him whether he was a Chaldean; he said that he was a Syriac. When I told him that I too was a Christian, he became quite effusive and got a sheepskin for me to sit upon, while he sat in front on the rich grass. He informed me that the village was now very poor, as indeed it looked, and he stated that things had been very bad since the great war broke out. The Kurds did just what they pleased. Five months before that time they came down from the mountains to the village and carried off corn and sheep and cows, and left scarcely anything. How the village people lived he did not know; they had very little to eat; but God was good, and the harvest was coming, and things would get better if the Kurds did not come down from the mountains again.

I said that in the last village I passed through the people complained of the Kurds coming and requiring sheep and corn, and other things; but they did not say that they were robbed of nearly everything they had.

The Syriac Christian said that the village in question was inhabited partly by Mussulmans, and that the Kurds never took so much from them as they did from Christians. Besides, their village was big, and could defend itself if the Kurds were taking too much. But what could a small village like this do?

I asked whether all the villagers were robbed by the Kurds, and the Syriac elder answered that something was taken from nearly all of them; some were robbed more and some less. If a village had got a wall, or was on a hill where it could defend itself, the Kurds only asked for a little; but small villages which the Kurds could easily enter and do what they pleased with were mostly ruined.

Leaving this village, the plain between the mountains is in parts little better than a marsh. Doubtless, the melting of the snow on the mountains to the north is answerable for this. After a while the plain begins to rise, and acre after acre is found to be a beautiful blue colour, a plant like the forget-me-not, with a larger flower, completely hiding the grass. Then follow miles of buttercups covering the plain with gold, and anon pretty white flowers in millions make the ground look as if it were mantled in snow.

While admiring the wonderful effect of these masses of colour we came upon a picturesque-looking old Kurd, in a sheepskin coat, looking after a small flock of sheep, the last remnant of his property, as we soon learned. I asked him for some sheep's milk, and crooking one of the ewes out of the flock, he milked it, and gave me a

drink. He then, to my surprise, kissed my hands, and asked that the beg would be pleased to listen to the account of what he had suffered during the last two years, and how he had been reduced to beggary, having now nothing left in the world but the few sheep he was then minding.

Of course, I told him that I was sorry that he should be so afflicted, and said that I would listen to him.

"Since I had a beard," said he, "I never saw the country in the state it has been in for the last two years. Before the war I was a rich man; I had plenty of everything, and sheep and cattle. My three sons were grown up, and helped me to look after things; but one was taken by the Government for a soldier, and I had to pay fifty pounds to get him off. Two months after that another son was taken, and I had to pay another fifty pounds to save him. Every month the Government wants something. The tax-gatherer is always coming, and I have nothing left. Since I was a boy I never saw things like this. I used to have plenty, and now I have nothing, and will have to beg."

The poor old man actually shed tears as he thought of this prospect; then, drying his eyes, he asked whether I was going to Diarbekir or to Stamboul?

I told him that I was on my way to both cities.

"Ah!" said he, "I thought the beg was going to Diarbekir; and, maybe, would see the Wali. The Pasha does not know the way we are being ruined, or he would do something for us; nor does the Sultan, at Stamboul. They do not tell the Pasha, or the Government, what is

being done to us. If you will tell the Pasha and the Government the way we are being used, I will pray for you for ever ! "

I told him that I would be sure to make known all that he had said, and I hoped his misfortunes would come to an end now that the war was over.

The prospect of the story of his woes and the sufferings of the people, being made known at Diarbekir by one who had no interest in misrepresenting the bitter truth, quite overjoyed the poor old man, and he touched my beard and kissed my hand with every demonstration of respect and gratitude. He appeared to believe, with a childlike simplicity, that once the facts were known at the seat of Government all would be made right at a word from the Wali or the Sultan.

I rode on, painfully impressed with the state of utter wretchedness to which this man, evidently once very well off, had been reduced in a few months by grinding taxation, and the demand for soldiers to fill up the cruel gaps made in the ranks of the army by the war. This part of Kurdistan is eight or ten days' journey from those parts of Armenia which were fought over by the contending armies. Yet it did not escape the suffering which war always drags in its train. The misfortunes of this Mussulman were cruelly aggravated by the conscription, which bears with terrible severity upon one section of the community, because the burden is not shared by the Christian or the Jewish. The inequality will have to be redressed if the Ottoman Empire is to continue to exist, for it is impossible that an army

on the requisite scale can be maintained if it is to be solely recruited from amongst the Mohammedans. The steady decrease in the numbers of the Mussulman population, while the Christians are increasing, shows that the present system must come to an end sooner or later, for the Mussulmans will not much longer be able to continue to supply the requisite number of men to the army. The loss of the European provinces, severed from the Empire by the war and the Congress of Berlin, must hasten the time when the Porte will have to choose between an army composed of Christians and Mussulmans, without distinction of creed, and an army confessedly too weak for the needs of the State. Bosnia and Bulgaria used to furnish large quotas of men. The law rendering the Christians liable to the conscription has hitherto—like many other laws having reference to the Christians—remained a dead letter; but of the neglect to enforce that law little is said. It is not a Christian grievance. But it is a Mussulman grievance of the first magnitude, and one which must be very speedily redressed, if the Ottoman Empire is not one day to fall in with a crash. At a time when universal military service is the rule in all the great Continental States, and throughout all Russia—Asiatic and European—it is impossible that an Empire like that of the Sultan, threatened on all sides, can continue to exist if one section only of the population—and that a declining section—has to bear the whole burden. It is a marvel that there has not been a collapse before now. If the Mussulman populations—Turkish, and Arabic, and

Kurdish—had not been sustained under the trial by the pride of religious ascendancy, they would, no doubt, have revolted long since against the injustice. But now that the Christian is acquiring and asserting equality with his Mohammedan fellow-subjects, and the action of the European States is apparently about to secure him a position of something more than equality, the "down-trodden Mussulman" may fairly claim that the duty of defending the common territory from foreign aggression and internal disorder shall be equally apportioned.

I arrived at Nisibin, a bright-looking little town, at five o'clock in the afternoon. The clean-looking white houses and the trees—a novel sight—in some of the larger gardens, give a cheerful, civilized appearance to the place, and the eye rests on it with pleasure after being long habituated to the desert and the unadorned villages of the Kurds. A heavy thunderstorm was gathering over the town as we approached, and I saw a phenomenon I had never witnessed before. Two flashes of lightning of great brilliancy shot upwards from the ground, about a mile to the south of the town, straight up to the heavy thunder-cloud. I rode rapidly through the streets to get into shelter before the rain fell, and noticed that the passers-by were a good deal more observant of our little cavalcade than was usual in other places. I put up under the arched gateway of the post station. I had not been there half an hour when the acting Kaimacham, or governor, a captain in the Turkish army, came in to pay me a visit. He had heard, he said, that I arrived in Nisibin from Deroona without an

escort, and he wanted to know why none had been provided for me? The captain was a very pleasant, blithe sort of fellow; I thanked him for calling, and told him that there were no zaptiehs at Deroona, that the three who were sent with me from Jezeerah refused to come farther, and that I had therefore come on unescorted and, as it happened, quite safely. He apologized for the absence of the zaptiehs at Deroona, and promised me an escort to Mardin. After coffee and cigarettes he took his departure.

I returned his visit an hour later, and then he told me that my arrival had created quite a commotion in the place. People came to him with the news that a Frank had ridden into the town, and that most likely he was a Russian, and so on. The captain said that he was so accustomed to see Europeans at Constantinople that he was surprised at the way people went on at the sight of one at Nisibin. It was quite evident to me that I owed the favour of the acting governor's visit to a desire to satisfy himself whether I was a Russian spy, and I could not but admire the delicacy and tact with which he disguised his mission when making the necessary inquiries.

During my return visit to the captain we sat in a garden which he was just bringing into cultivation and planting with shrubs. He told me that fruit was scarcely to be had in that part of the country; people did not seem to care for it, for if they did, the soil and the climate would produce any quantity desired. In Constantinople, he said, I would find strawberries and

other fruit in abundance, the earliest supplies being brought by steamer from Malta, an island which he had visited. Constantinople, he was sure, would astonish me; it was a splendid city, beyond comparison superior to Baghdad or Mosul, or even, he said, laughing, Nisibin itself. It was quite al Frangi (European) in its style and size. He spoke of the capital of the Turkish Empire with an enthusiasm which was quite refreshing, and it was evident to me that one Turk at least felt a patriotic pride in the glory of his country; indeed, from many conversations which I have had with Turks of different classes, I have come to the conclusion that it is an error to suppose that there is no feeling of patriotism in the bosom of these people. The fact seems to be very different from the assumption so generally accepted as correct. When the Turkish surgeons in charge of the sick and wounded left behind at Erzeroum towards the close of the war were offered their pay in silver money by the Russians, they refused to accept it, although the salaries sent them by the Porte, being in paper, hardly kept them from starvation. The self-denial thus displayed could only have been inspired by a feeling of patriotic pride which rendered the acceptance of even the means of living from the victors impossible to them as men of honour.

I have frequently heard Turks of all grades—and many officials too—speak of the events of the war in a way that showed that they were far indeed from being insensible to other considerations than the selfish ones for which alone they get credit in some quarters. The Turks alone

of all the diverse races in the empire, appear to have any instinct of cohesion or desire to maintain the State and ameliorate its condition. The Arabs and the Kurds, it need scarcely be said, have no political views or aspirations whatever. If the yoke of the Government were removed from their shoulders, they would plunder their neighbours and fight amongst themselves; they could not even imagine the possibility of becoming the ruling race and administering the country. And the Native Christians, if more orderly, are quite as devoid of the political instinct: their whole ambition would be satisfied if Russia or England, or some other strong Power, would take over the districts in which they vegetate, and protect them from the raids of their more enterprising and lawless neighbours.

A few of the more educated Armenians hope to secure in some way the autonomy of the country in which they by no means form the majority of the population. Whether they could keep the Mussulman majority of the population in order we need not inquire; granting that a flock of doves could, if well organized and assured of diplomatic support from distant eagles, keep a much larger number of hawks in subjection, the fact remains that even the Armenians, by far the most capable and the most numerous of the Christian races in Asiatic Turkey, have no aspiration for anything further than a provincial autonomy. They do not regard themselves as the heirs of the Empire, and never in their wildest flights think of superseding the Osmanlis, and themselves welding the Empire together for the com-

mon good. The only race among them all which has any real desire to govern is the Turkish. The others either desire, like the Kurds and Arabs, to be simply freed from the shackles of government altogether, so that they may pillage in peace; or, like the Christians, to be protected from without, or at most to acquire a local predominance. If we want to find an Oriental equivalent for patriotism, or love of country, in Asiatic Turkey, we need look for it in the Turkish section of the population alone.

But we have wandered far from Nisibin. The acting governor promised me two zaptiehs to escort me to Mardin, and he said that, being Circassians, I need fear nothing on the road. I asked him whether the Circassians were more to be relied on than Kurds or others when on police duty, and he said that they were very strong men, and were always well armed, and knew how to use their arms with great skill. That being the case, neither Kurds nor Arabs cared to meet them.

Nisibin—the Nisibis of the Romans—was one of the three great fortresses which guarded the eastern frontier of the Empire against the Persians. These fortresses were Nisibis, Dara, and Amida. Nisibis is now a small open town with some three hundred Mussulman and fifty Christian families living in it. Dara is a Roman ruin six hours to the west, and Amida, the present Diarbekir, is still surrounded by its Roman wall. Dara is on a hill a little to the right of the route to Mardin, and is well worth a visit, as I learned at Mardin from the American missionary, the Rev. A. W. Andrus, who was

at the ruins almost at the very time I passed close to them, without knowing that half an hour's ride would have taken me to the spot. The walls are nearly three miles in circuit, and in parts are standing erect and unworn, as if built but yesterday. There are sixty towers, square or circular, at intervals around the walls. A stream runs through the town, and the fortifications are of great strength at its points of entrance and exit. A vast reservoir, partly excavated in the solid rock, must have contained water sufficient to last during a long siege. There are eight compartments, each one hundred and fifty feet long by fifty deep and twenty broad, all once arched over. Four of the great arches are still nearly intact.

In the early morning of the 6th May I left Nisibin for Mardin. The two Circassians, provided according to promise as an escort, were fine men nearly six feet high, and very quiet, civil fellows, the most obliging zaptiehs I had yet. One of them spoke Russian as well as Tcherkess, but knew nothing of Turkish. The Government has taken five hundred of the Circassians from the country a little to the south into its service as zaptiehs, and the result has been very satisfactory. The gendarmerie is strengthened, and the potential and actual robbers of the district reduced by five hundred men, and the gain is great both ways. The Government, about twelve years ago, planted some twenty-five thousand Circassians at Ras-el-Ain in the debateable land between the southernmost Kurdish hills and the plains, as a breakwater against the Arabs, and for a time the mea-

sure answered admirably. The Arabs found their match in these splendid mountaineers, and were obliged to discontinue their raids northwards. But the Circassians in time set up in business on their own account. They

A CIRCASSIAN COLONIST.

stole horses in Mesopotamia, and took them to Erzeroum for sale. They stole cows in Armenia, and brought them by way of a return cargo to Mardin or Diarbekir. When the troubles in Europe, two years ago, became aggravated, the Government sent all available troops

from other parts of the empire to fight Servia and Montenegro, and ultimately to fight the Russians. The Circassians thereupon began to pillage at large. So last year five hundred of them were taken into the police. The zaptiehs furnished me at Nisibin belonged to this interesting corps, and as I have said, they were fine athletic fellows, and very civil and obliging. Each of them carried a whole arsenal of arms, a rifle in a sheepskin cover, a couple of silver-mounted horse-pistols, a long dirk, a short dagger, and a heavy sabre. An ample supply of cartridges artistically displayed ornamented each capacious breast.

These Circassian colonists are locally called Tchetchens, and they enjoy a terrible reputation amongst their neighbours. Nevertheless they are a fine stock, and with firmness and good management, they might be made very useful members of society. When they were first settled at Ras-el-Ain, proper steps were not taken to give them habits of order and regular industry. The Government supplied them for some time with daily rations, and the contractors cheated both the donors and the receivers, to the great dissatisfaction of one and the other. The authority of the Circassian chiefs was not recognized; it was indeed set aside by the Government, and no adequate machinery was organized for bringing evil-doers directly under the power of the law. The general result was that the colonists by degrees gave up all idea of working the soil for their living, and took to robbing caravans, and pillaging even the friendly Arabs. Being men of powerful physique, and very skilful with

their weapons, there was no resisting them, as the less thorough-going Bedouins might have been, and they came to be regarded as the most formidable robbers in the country.

Another peculiarity added to the dread with which the Tcherkess were looked upon by the surrounding villagers. They stole not only horses and cows and sheep, but children. Girls especially have a marketable value in the eyes of these mountaineers, and if they get an opportunity they will steal them with a view to fattening and selling them at a handsome profit as real Circassian beauties. It is not every connoisseur could detect the fraud. As every one knows, a Mussulman who has been successful in life is almost always desirous of completing his domestic happiness by the acquisition of a Circassian beauty to embellish his harem. As a rule, the men who succeed most frequently in gratifying their craving for the beautiful, are the Pashas, because they have not only the money to buy the article they require, but they have naturally the first offer from Circassian parents anxious to settle their daughters comfortably in life. A decidedly handsome Circassian girl is worth in hard cash from four hundred to six and even eight hundred pounds. At Constantinople I was fortunate enough to secure photographs of some of these Tchetchen maidens, and I think few would consider the fair originals dear at even eight hundred pounds.

In the course of the journey I saw many Circassian women in humble life, and though they were tall and well made, they did not strike me as being particularly

beautiful. They were rather bony and angular, and the skin appeared just a little coarse. When they are destined for the harem it is found necessary to subject them to a special process, which has the effect of making them beautiful for ever, and, in a sense, priceless. They are fed on a diet which gives them *embonpoint*, without adding to the redness and coarseness which exposure to the air have conferred on the skin. I tried to get the whole bill of fare on which these interesting girls are fattened, but I regret to say my informant could only tell me that it consisted principally of milk and lentils, with sweetmeats—possibly Turkish delight. While their well-shaped bones are being covered over in this way, the skin is softened by the frequent use of the bath, and many unguents cunningly prepared. When all is done we have for the result—

> "Much finer women, ripe and real,
> Than all the nonsense of the stone ideal!"

When a Pasha purchases one of these beautiful animals, he is naturally as proud of the acquisition as an English sporting nobleman would be at having a magnificent racer in his paddock. He does not trouble himself much about the fact that the queen of his heart and harem has no education of any kind, cannot read a verse of the Koran or of anything else, and is as capable of giving him counsel in difficult circumstances, and of bringing up his children in the way good little Moslem boys and girls should be brought up, as if she were a negress from Central Africa. He only finds out the disadvantages

of all this when she grows old. His family will feel the effect of it much sooner. The boys will grow up without that home training which a more or less educated mother belonging to a respectable Turkish family would have given him, and he will look upon self-indulgence and the *dolce far niente* as the highest good. The Pashas whose mothers were and whose wives are Circassian are known as Circassian Pashas, and are spoken of with something like contempt by the more self-denying, religious, and often, perhaps, more fanatical men, whose boast it is that they are Turks on the side of both parents. But all the same, a Circassian beauty gives lustre to a harem, and that compensates for many things.

CHAPTER VIII.

MARDIN: MISSIONARY LABOURS.

From Nisibin to Mardin—Singular appearance of Mardin—A road at last—Entering the city—Precipitous streets—The American Mission—Jacobite converts—Outrage by Kurdish agas—State of things in the city—The Wali of Diarbekir and the intriguers—Visit to Bahiram Pasha—An exile from Constantinople—The sights of Mardin—The Moslem schools—Tradition of a siege by Tamerlane—Climate—Population—Missionaries—Influence of the Western Missions on Turkey—Education—Tolerance of the Government—Testimony of the Missionaries on that point—Progress accomplished.

When we set out from Nisibin for Mardin, I found that the post-horse provided for me was quite lame. The surajee said that it made no matter; if the horse continued lame, he would take off the shoes, which perhaps made it limp a little. Besides, there was no other horse. Things looked dismal enough when one of the Circassians volunteered to get a comrade to hire me his horse for the postal rate of three and a half piastres, or seven pence an hour. I was soon mounted on a fine Arab, which would be cheap at sixty pounds in Bombay, but which cost here only fourteen pounds Turkish. This made my journey to Mardin very pleasant, for everything depends on the quality of the horse. This year,

as I have said, the post-horses in Turkey are exceptionally bad. It is the custom for the Government to put new horses on the routes every March, but last March, the Government being out of funds, was unable to do so, and last year's worn-out animals have to go on for another year as best they can.

Our route lay again along the lower slopes of a line of hills. At ten o'clock we turned to the north, and entered these hills by a long pass, the highest point of which was about a thousand feet above the level of the undulating plain. When well in among the hills the town of Mardin, built on the precipitous sides of one of the highest, came suddenly into view. A more singular or more picturesque town it would not be possible, I think, to find in all the world. The hill is 2100 feet high, and is of oblong shape and very precipitous. The top is flat, and is crowned with a line of fortifications which surrounded the town when it was built on the summit of the hill. But now the town is not on the summit; it is on the southern slope of the hill at an elevation of about sixteen hundred feet above the plain. The houses rise in terraces one above the other, and the mosques and minarets and the great madressas or schools for which Mardin is famous, are conspicuous amongst them. As you look at the town from the opposite mountain you wonder how the buildings hold their footing and avoid slipping into the valley a thousand feet below. The Serai, or government offices, the well-built houses of the American Protestant Mission, and the extensive buildings of the Roman Catholic Mission,

stand out in bold relief against the steep mountain-side. The town is built of white limestone, not dissimilar to that of which the Paris of the Second Empire has been fashioned, and the effect may be imagined.

The builders of Mardin are very skilful. The blocks of stone are cut and laid with great accuracy, and the general style of construction shows a mastery of the art of which there is no evidence in any other city so far east.

On my approach to Mardin I found, to my great surprise and satisfaction, a road—a real macadamized road—the like of which I had not seen since I left British India. I had begun to forget that such things as made roads had any existence in the East, and I could scarcely have been more surprised if I had suddenly come upon a gas-lamp. The road winds through the hills and goes past Mardin, on to Diarbekir, and for a few leagues beyond. For a portion of the distance it is a very good, useful road, but there are stages of many miles which the horseman must very carefully avoid, if he wants to arrive at his journey's end; it is simply impossible to go a hundred yards without coming to the ground amongst the disjointed boulders, between every two of which there is a hole which serves as a trap for the horse's feet. Wheeled vehicles are not in use in any part of this district, even where the road is good. The absence of cross roads and the frequent solutions of continuity in the practicable parts of the main road render carts and carriages out of the question.

The road, from the point where it begins to Mardin,

and indeed for most of the way to Diarbekir, is fairly good. When I turned a corner in the hills and came in view of the town of Mardin, the houses of which looked at that distance as if they had been cut in cork and glued to a big blackboard to set them off, I was so struck by the novelty of the effect that I stopped and took a sketch of it. The Circassian's horse, however, was so unquiet that I could not do the work very completely, and I was therefore glad to borrow a good deal from a drawing of the hill which I saw a little later on at the American Mission, the joint production of Dr. Reynolds and Miss C. Ely, of the Van station of the missionaries from beyond the Atlantic. The frontispiece to the present volume is therefore the result of the labours of three painstaking artists, and its accuracy may be relied on.

An old wall, built of freestone, surrounds the town, and there are bastions and towers at the usual intervals. Even to arrive at the gates on the lower side of the city a great deal of hill-climbing has to be done, and once fairly within the walls the streets rise up at fearful gradients; it is sometimes hard to distinguish between the roadway and the side of a house. As a matter of course the streets are very narrow, and they are built on little terraces in such a manner that when going along the base of one row of houses you are on a level with the roofs of another row. The town is inhabited by some sixteen thousand people, of whom about a fourth are Christians. The healthy, handsome children running about speak well for the salubrity of the climate.

Nowhere have I seen such ruddy cheeks and sparkling black eyes, except perhaps in the coloured pictures of the "Illustrated London News."

Another observation as one goes along. The women —I speak of the young not the old—are remarkably beautiful and of various types of beauty. Some have the Greek profile, and others are Italian in face and complexion; but the majority, of course, are more oriental, though they are by no means so unmistakably oriental as those of Baghdad and Mosul. All the younger women have brilliant black or brown eyes, and the rich complexions of the brunettes of the south of France. These visions of loveliness do not hide their faces behind the hideous black masks of which one sees too many in less-favoured towns. Few go completely veiled, and many do not veil their faces at all until you have time to take a look. I was lost in wonder when riding through the town, at the spectacle of so much beauty, for I did not then know what I learned a little later on, that the houris of Paradise come from Mardin.

After an arduous ride up ladder-like streets, nearly two miles long, I arrived at the American Mission, and was most kindly received by the Rev. A. N. Andrus, its able and active head. When I rode into the enclosure with the two zaptiehs, who alone had kept quite up with me, the little daughters of Mr. Andrus ran off in great agitation to their mother, saying that "three Circassians had come in!" They, too, had heard that Circassians steal children as well as horses, and as I was in bad company, I was set down as a Circassian and a kid-

napper. They could hardly be reassured by hearing that I was a Christian and that the Circassians were zaptiehs, merely come as an escort; they viewed me with suspicion the whole time I stopped at Mardin.

The last European traveller who visited the Mission was Mr. George Smith, the distinguished Assyriologist, in the August of 1876. Mardin is not much troubled with tourists. Mr. Cook, the great Excursionist, has not yet found it out, and travellers are few and far between, most people hurrying past to get to Diarbekir or Nisibin, as the case may be, for the reputation of its steep and labyrinthine streets does not encourage them to visit it. Mr. George Smith, when he stopped for a few hours at Mr. Andrus's house, was already ailing; he resisted all entreaties to stay a week at Mardin, to recruit his strength, and went on to Aleppo, to die there of fever and exhaustion. The American Mission now consists of Mr. Andrus, its head, Dr. Thom, a Medical Missionary, their wives, and two young ladies, who act as Missionary teachers. A congregation of about a hundred and fifty persons has been got together; a theological seminary has been formed to instruct native teachers, and a school has been opened and is fairly attended. The theological students are kept at their studies for seven months of the year, and for five months are employed as teachers in the Christian villages of the districts around.

The converts to Protestantism are chiefly from the sect of Jacobites. Some Christians in a village in the mountains, sixteen hours from Mardin, recently declared themselves Protestants, and thus placed themselves

under the protection of the American Mission. The Kurdish Agas, or feudal lords, seeing in this an intention of escaping the illegal exactions and oppression to which they had been formerly subjected, had recourse to every species of oppression to make them withdraw their declaration of Protestantism; they caused their houses to be broken into, and the head ornaments—consisting of gold and silver coins—to be torn off the women's heads. This was a scandalous outrage. The Mission at Mardin was appealed to, and a telegram was sent by Mr. Andrus to Abder Rahman Pasha, the enlightened Governor-General of Diarbekir, who issued orders to have three of the Agas arrested and taken to Mardin.

The mutaseriff of Mardin, was a native of Diarbekir, and he did not inspire any particular confidence amongst either Christians or Mussulmans. The town was in a state bordering on anarchy. A week before an attempt was made to shoot the provincial treasurer, several shots being fired at his room door. The night before I arrived at Mardin a revolver was fired off at the house of a certain Sheikh Eyoub. The man who fired it was arrested, and he stated that the sheikh's servant gave him the revolver, and told him to fire at the house, so that a complaint might be made to the Government that the sheikh's life was in danger. The Governor said that the attempt on the life of the provincial treasurer was of the same character, but that seemed doubtful.

The fact is that things were out of joint in Mardin just then. The Wali of Diarbekir is an honest man,

and will have nothing to do with the corrupt practices that were prevalent throughout the province until he arrived there a year ago. The Diarbekirlis wished to disgust him with his post, and in this they succeeded; he twice sent in his resignation to the Porte, but fortunately it was not accepted. The subordinates did not support him cordially, and certain corrupt intriguers, for the most part hailing from Diarbekir—Kara Amida, where people's hearts, like the city walls and the dogs in the streets, are all black, according to a popular saying—were fomenting mischief. There was some alarm at Mardin and at Diarbekir itself among the Christians, for outrages were constantly occurring, and no one knew where they might end. The American and the Roman Catholic Capuchin missionaries telegraphed from Mardin to Diarbekir and Constantinople, stating that all feeling of security was at an end. The Wali sent fifty gendarmes from Diarbekir to Mardin with orders to arrest one or two dangerous characters and reinforce the police of the town. The English and the French Ambassadors were communicated with. Nothing like a general outbreak was, from what I could see, to be apprehended either at Mardin or Diarbekir. Still no one knows what may happen in a country like this, when the Government has neither money nor troops at hand, and a knot of soured and disappointed rascals have an interest in creating confusion and alarm by their intrigues, so as to distract attention from peculation and other malpractices. The first item of news which I read in one of the Constantinopolitan newspapers upon my

arrival in the capital was that Bahiram Pasha, the Governor of Mardin, had been removed to another post. I presume matters will now improve in Mardin.

On the 9th May I paid a visit to Bahiram Pasha, and was accompanied by Mr. Andrus. The Governor was one of the most melancholy-looking men I ever saw; his sallow complexion, which added to his lugubrious appearance, was said to be the result of incessant smoking. He gave me the impression of being somewhat perverse and weak, but not dishonest or ill-intentioned. The fact that Mr. Andrus had telegraphed to the Governor-General at Diarbekir about recent events of a disquieting character was spoken of. The Governor asked why Mr. Andrus thought it necessary to make a complaint to the Wali. Mr. Andrus replied that he had not made a "complaint," he had simply telegraphed that certain things had occurred. "Well," said the sad-looking Governor, "since you telegraphed that an attack was made upon the provincial treasurer's house, and that the guilty parties have not been arrested, you may now think it but just to telegraph further to his Excellency that last night a man fired a revolver at the Sheikh Eyoub's house, and was arrested on the spot by the zaptiehs. He confesses that he was given the revolver by the sheikh's own servant, and told to fire it at the house, so that the Government might hear that the place was attacked, and that there is no security for any one in Mardin. Having telegraphed the one circumstance, you may think fit to telegraph also the other!"

This seemed to be a fair suggestion, and Mr. Andrus

promised to act upon it. A second telegram was accordingly sent off from the mission to the Governor-General, who promptly replied to it as he had to the first, thanking the sender for the information, and promising immediate inquiry.

Several local notabilities were on the Governor's divan during the interview, and all had a preoccupied, and it seemed to me a somewhat scared look, as if they were apprehensive of some unpleasant issue to the existing complications. A brisk and intelligent man of middle age was also present whom I remarked before I was informed that he was exiled from Constantinople after the fall of Midhat Pasha, as a too advanced reformer. When we left the divan this effendi followed us out, and we had a long and interesting chat upon the politics of Mardin and Diarbekir; those of the capital were studiously avoided as too painful.

The visit to the Governor over, Mr. Andrus very obligingly took me to see the principal sights of Mardin, with which he was the better acquainted, as he had written a little *brochure* upon the place, to which I am indebted for many interesting facts.

The first building I was shown was the splendid Moslem madressa or school. Its vaulted halls and spacious verandahs look down on a spacious quadrangle in which is a reservoir of great size always overflowing with purest water. The suite of rooms for the students are all designed upon a scale which shows that Mardin must, in very truth, have been in the old times what it is popularly said to have been, a great centre of learning.

For this madressa is only one amongst many, though it is unquestionably the finest. Its great doorway, elaborately carved in arabesques composed wholly of verses of the Koran, was pronounced by Mr. Taylor, formerly the English Consular Agent for Armenia and Kurdistan, to be one of the finest specimens of Saracenic architecture and design now remaining. There are several mosques, but none of equal pretensions to the madressas. The stone of which the city is built, is a soft, white limestone, and contains a few fossil shells. The city wall is of the same material; it is about three miles in circumference, five feet in thickness, varying in height from ten to thirty feet, and has four gates, which as well as the wall, are in a tumble-down condition.

Mardin is one of the chief cities in the province of Kurdistan. It is built high up on the southern and eastern slopes of one of the highest peaks of the Ante-Taurus range of mountains, which forms the northern boundary of Mesopotamia. It was known in classic times as Mosius.

The original site of the city was, as I have said, upon the summit of the lofty and almost perpendicular rock which crowns the mountain, and upon which the ruins of castle walls still stand out against the sky, at a height of five hundred feet above the present city. When the city was founded upon its first site, or by whom, is unknown. It certainly was not a city when Amida (Diarbekir), Dara, and Nisibis (Nisibin), and a once strong, but now nameless fortress between these two latter places, constituted the well-fortified frontier of

the Eastern Empire. Tradition makes it successfully resist, for three years, the repeated attacks of Tamerlane, in the latter part of the fourteenth century, and it unquestionably, for a long time, hurled defiance at him from its almost inaccessible crag.

There is a disagreement in regard to the origin of the name Mardin (pronounced Mardeen). Some incline to derive it from the Syriac and Arabic root, signifying bold and insolent in rebellion. Others, with probably greater propriety, give the name a Kurdish origin, and derive it from the two words Mer and Deen, which mean *insane man!* This derivation has a tradition to make it acceptable and to settle it: A woman in search of lost sheep wandered upon the heights, and accidentally came upon a man slumbering among the steep crags. She woke him with an inquiry as to what he was doing in such a desolate and inaccessible spot. He replied, "This is the site of a future city." The woman answered, "You are an insane man!" and resumed her hunt for her sheep; and so this nameless personage has given a name to the city of which he prophesied.

The city, as at present placed, is one thousand six hundred feet above the vast plains of Mesopotamia, which stretch out, in an almost unbroken level, to the south-east, south, and south-west. The houses are for the most part built in terraces one above another, in such a manner that the roof of one forms the yard to that which is above it. The city is not very broad, yet the hill is so steep that not infrequently snow will fall in the upper portions while it is raining in the lower. Although

so lifted up above the plains, yet in the summer the city suffers from its nearness to them. They are very hot through the day, but in the night there is usually a cool breeze blowing over them. At times the heated air rises and is driven against the mountain slopes upon which the city rests. The result of this is a tendency to uniformity of temperature day and night. It is not the degree of heat, but the uniformity, and the long continuance of a high temperature, which render Mardin a little trying to nervously-constituted foreigners. The thermometer does not rise above 105° in the shade during the hottest days, but through many nights the temperature is 85° on the average. Notwithstanding this, Mardin is a healthy place. There is no malaria, for there is no irrigation in the immediate vicinity to occasion it. The average man of Mardin is larger and heavier than the average man of most cities in those regions.

The population of the city, according to the latest government returns, is 16,386, distributed as follows: Moslems, 8184; Papal Armenians, 3188; Syrians, 2922; Papal Syrians, 1340; Chaldeans (Papal Nestorians), 420; Protestants, 308; Jews, 24.

Mardin differs from most other cities in the empire in this respect, that the Moslem, the Christian, and the Jewish portions of the population do not occupy distinct and separate quarters. As a consequence, the Moslems are less clannish, and less fanatical than is usually the case. This fact is considered by the missionaries to be rather unfavourable to their work at present, but will

tell for it in what they hope is a near future. There will be greater safety for the inquiring Moslem; he will be more accessible to his Christian neighbour.

The language of the city is chiefly Arabic, though Kurdish is also largely spoken in the markets, and Turkish in all transactions with the Government. This is the only station under the care of the American Board, where the labours of the missionaries are directed to the Arabic-speaking races of Turkey.

The first resident American missionary was Mr. Williams, who moved there from Mosul in 1858. In January, 1867, a church of nineteen members was organized upon a self-supporting basis, and a pastor was ordained, the people paying his entire salary of 2400 piastres from the first. They have since raised it, and pay 6000 piastres (about 60*l.*) for pastor, school teacher, and current expenses. The church numbers about forty-five members, and the average congregations one hundred and fifty. Now, this community, in addition to their regular contributions, are stirring themselves to raise 200*l.* towards a new chapel, and are moving for the establishment of a normal high school, that is to be a partnership concern between them and the missionaries, inasmuch as it is intended to be a preparatory department to the theological school, as well as open to more advanced pupils from all communities, on payment of a small fee.

Connected with this station is a seminary, which has graduated two classes, with a course of five summers for each, and has now two classes under instruction. In

the first class were five men, and in the second four. Alongside of this, and of equal importance with it, is the seminary for training women and girls—the wives of the students, and girls from the cities and villages—to be Bible-readers and teachers among the women and girls where Protestant communities have sprung up. This school has now seventeen pupils.

Mardin is an ecclesiastical centre. It is the patriarchal seat of the Syrian or Jacobite Church, the residence of the Patriarch of the Papal Syrians, of the Bishop of the Chaldeans, and of the Bishop of the Catholic Armenians. It is the stronghold of the papacy in all this region.

I am inclined to think that sufficient note is not usually taken of the work that is being accomplished in Turkey by the devoted labours of the missionaries of the Western Churches. They are not successful in converting the Mussulmans to Christianity it is true, although there is now no fear that a convert will be beheaded for changing his faith. A Mussulman may become a Christian if he pleases, so far as the Government is concerned; apostasy is no longer a capital offence. But the Mohammedans do not avail themselves of the privilege. It is a great mistake, however, to conclude from this that the labours of the missionaries are sterile. They are fast raising the level of the Christian populations throughout Asiatic Turkey; they are steadily raising the general level of education among not only the Christians, but the Mussulmans. Their admirable schools are introducing western ideas and western habits

of thought in lands where the mind has been stagnant for ages.

It is, of course, true that the schools in question are attended only by the children of Christians; but their example has stimulated the Mussulmans, and the schools of the latter are showing signs of improvement. The progress is, indeed, slow; but it must, in the nature of things, become rapidly accelerated. If the Mussulmans are not content to see themselves completely distanced in the race by the next generation of Christians, they will have to remodel their whole school system; they have not, it must be borne in mind, to create one, for they had it in existence long before School Boards were thought of in England. Now that the schools of the American and the Roman Catholic missionaries are availing themselves over so wide a field of the complete toleration accorded by the Turkish Government, the effect will infallibly be seen—it has already begun to make itself visible—not only amongst the Christians, but amongst the Mussulmans also. The Jews have already entered with considerable spirit into the new movement, which is surely revivifying the intelligence of the country. At Baghdad we have seen the admirable school recently established there by the Universal Israelite Alliance, and how, after much discouragement arising from the apathy of the Hebrew population during several years, it has become a complete success, and has its class-rooms full. That is but another proof that the example of the Christian missionary schools has not been without its effect upon the non-Christian com-

munities, and consequently upon the country as a whole.

I have already mentioned the declaration of the accomplished chief of the Roman Catholic Mission at Mosul, "That in matters of religion and education the Ottoman Government accorded the most complete liberty —nothing further was to be desired in respect to either." Being now at Mardin, at the American Mission, I may show the reality of the progress that has been made in this respect, by a brief extract from the Sixty-ninth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, embodying the opinions of the American and British missionaries. "To those who knew Turkey half a century ago," says the report, "or even forty years ago, and compare its condition then with what it is now, a marvellous transformation of general sentiment cannot fail to be recognized, and the wonder is not that so much of prejudice, ignorance, and superstition remains, but that so much has been overthrown, and that a new class of ideas has driven out the old fanatical, intolerant, and persecuting spirit which frowned on Protestantism, and loaded it with bitter anathemas. When Christian workers from foreign lands first set their feet on Turkish soil, their presence was regarded with extreme disfavour and uneasiness. The most awful terror of Protestantism prevailed. It was looked upon as the embodiment of all mischief and confusion, and in no wise to be encouraged by a cowardly and mistaken tolerance. To forsake the Koran and to renounce the Moslem faith was a crime infallibly entailing death, and the headless trunk of

some unfortunate offender might occasionally be seen rotting in the streets of Constantinople, torn of dogs and insulted by man, as a warning against apostasy. At that period the ideas of religious liberty and freedom of conscience were utterly repugnant to the native mind; their meaning could scarcely be comprehended. To admit them in practice was supposed to foreshadow a revolution of the worst and most dangerous character. It was the same in the domain of religion and in the civil Government, for not only did Mohammedanism ruthlessly wield the sword of persecution, but the Christian Churches, Greek and Armenian, were fiercely intolerant, and breathed a spirit of intense animosity and hatred one towards another. It is all reversed now. Religious liberty and freedom of conscience are accepted as established principles, and no one feels that he has a right to interfere with the convictions or belief of his neighbour. The Moslem mind is not now what it was then on the subject of religion; and the privilege of every man to belong to whatever ecclesiastical community he pleases, without incurring any pains or penalties, is as really recognized in Constantinople as in Great Britain or America. Christianity may be taught without molestation to whoever is disposed to receive instruction. Schools can be set up into which the children of any nationality are free to enter, and Christian workers are empowered to adopt whatever instrumentality they please for the furtherance of their objects, provided always they do not overstep the limits of civil law. The like remarks apply to the Christian churches. The idea

of reciprocal toleration has penetrated their communities, and the spirit of domineering tyranny is resisted. . . . Education has become a new thing in Turkey; it is altogether on a different footing from what it was formerly; and the valuable books of instruction issued by the missionaries have set up a standard never understood before. The Government is establishing schools on a large scale, and the example they have witnessed has had no slight influence in calling forth the exertions that are now felt to be imperative for the welfare of the nation. Christian work has been a power in Turkey, not a mere name; and its effect in moulding and altering the long-cherished notions that had asserted their supremacy for ages cannot be contemplated without emotions of astonishment and gratitude."

To those who believe that there is no such thing as progress in Turkey, that all is retrogression and decline into barbarism, this passage may give material for reflection. The truth is, the progress accomplished in various directions has been immense. Any one that goes into the Museum of the Janissaries in the Atmeidan at Constantinople, and sees what a complete transformation has been accomplished, not only in the uniform and equipment of the army, but in the costume of the people, and knows what that implies, and notes the bundle of rods of heavy wood, six feet long and four inches in circumference, used as ordinary instruments of the bastinado less than thirty years ago, and now regarded by Turks and Franks alike as we look upon the thumb-screw and the rack in the Tower, will comprehend the magnitude

of the work that has been accomplished within living memory. The misfortune is, that the work, great as it undoubtedly has been, is not adequate to the circumstances; the Government, sharing the characteristics of its own subordinates all over the country, has not been thorough; and the want of thoroughness and energy, the absence of complete and all-compelling efficiency, has marred everything, and enabled its enemies to ignore the good that has been done and adroitly direct the attention of the world exclusively to what has been left undone.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NATIVE CHRISTIANS.

Alleged corruption of the Eastern Churches—Antagonistic sects—Christian and Moslem—A Chaldean view—Assyrian origin of the Nestorians—Monophysites—Dissemination of their doctrine—The Chaldean Patriarchate—The Latin influence—Action of Pius IX.—Opinion of American Missionaries—Language of the Chaldean Christians—Xenophon on Chaldeans and Armenians—Philological argument—Spread of Christianity in the East—Nestorians said to be of Jewish race.

THE missionaries themselves freely admit that they cannot make any impression upon the Mohammedan population in the way of conversion. Their efforts in this direction have hitherto resulted in a failure that would be very discouraging but for the success attained in quickening and strengthening the religious life amongst the native Christians, and giving a valuable impulse to education. "Converts have been gathered sparingly," says the report I referred to in the last chapter, "from the ranks of Moslems, but far more abundantly from the members of corrupt Eastern Churches." It is not for one so little acquainted with the Churches in question as I am to endorse the statement that they are corrupt; but I think no one who has even a passing glimpse of the condition of the native

Christians will hesitate to admit that they must gain by being brought directly into active communion with one or other of the more enlightened ecclesiastical organizations of the West.

While I was in the country, I endeavoured to profit by the opportunity to get some definite knowledge with respect to the various antagonistic sects of Native Christians, of whose discord and strife I was constantly hearing. Who are the Chaldeans? Are they really a "Nation" as well as a Church? Are the Nestorians really "the Protestants of the East"? and to what did they owe that appellation? Why were the Jacobites and the Syrian Christians able to worship up to a given day together in the same churches, and then turn upon one another so fiercely that the Turkish troops had to intervene to restore peace? Why did a Syriac Christian feel deeply mortified when I innocently asked him whether he was a Chaldean? Is there any broad, intelligible line of distinction—known to themselves—between the doctrines of one sect and those of another?

I cannot say that my desire for knowledge was altogether gratified by the answers I received. If I were to confess the truth, I should perhaps say that the more I heard, the more hopelessly fogged I became. The one distinct idea I derived from the conflict of confused statements my simple questions elicited, was, that in the opinion of each sect, each and all of the others were hopelessly perverse, besotted, ignorant, and dishonest; that, in a word, they were somewhat worse than Mussulmans. If there were some who took a more charitable

view of the native Christians, as a body, they were almost as a matter of course gravitating towards the Protestant Church,—becoming, as it is termed, "American,"—or else had been brought up at one or other of the Roman Catholic Mission Schools. The hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, characterizing the different native sects in their inter-relations could not easily be exaggerated; and, I am sorry to say, that in the opinion of men who had ample opportunity of judging from personal observation, there is only too much foundation for the bad opinion which each of those sects entertains of the other. "When a Mohammedan gives me his word," said a gentleman who had a long experience of the country, "whether he be a Turk or a Kurd, I can always rely upon it. I have never been what is called 'done' by a Mussulman, although I have had transactions of all kinds with Moslems for years; but when a native Christian tells me anything I have come instinctively to ask myself where the deception lies—in what direction I am going to be tricked. There are exceptions, of course; but if any one has many dealings with Mussulmans and native Christians in these parts, he will soon learn that the one may be depended on, and the other will almost to a certainty deceive and cheat if you give him a chance."

It was, however, my good fortune, when at Mosul, to make the acquaintance of a Chaldean, who, in his own person, shows how contact with Europeans—and, if the word may be allowed, the Europeanization of the decayed Christianity of those lands—may elevate a man both

morally and intellectually. I allude to Mr. Hormuzd Rassam, himself a native of Mosul, but now an Englishman in thought and action. From this gentleman I got a long and very interesting account of those discordant sectaries, of their origin, and their tenets. No one could have a better opportunity than he of acquiring an intimate knowledge of what is in some respects a very dry if not repulsive subject; but is, under another aspect, one of considerable interest. Who are these native Christians? Are they the descendants of one or other of the old imperial races which once ruled the whole country from the mountains of Persia to the Mediterranean? When did they adopt Christianity, and how did it come to pass that they kept the faith when they lost all else? Mr. Rassam shows, and it may be said conclusively, that the Chaldeans are really a "nation;" that they are descended from the people known in both sacred and profane history by that name; that they are of the race of the old Assyrians, whose kindred the Chaldeans were; and that their language is that used in certain books of the Bible, and is of the greatest antiquity. With respect to the question of their being of the same race as the people who built Nineveh, I think that any one who has seen the number of Chaldean Christians, both in Baghdad and Mosul, whose faces might have been models for the sculptors who cut in alabaster the presentments of kings and warriors and priests to adorn the palaces of that city, will not be inclined to doubt that the Chaldeans and the Assyrians were of one and the same stock.

I cannot do better than let Mr. Rassam tell in his own words who the native Christians of these vast regions are, whence they come, and what they believe.

"I will give you," he says, "some information about the Christian communities settled in Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Kurdistan. I shall chiefly dwell upon the term Chaldean and Assyrian; because I believe that before the great schism which took place in the fifth century, the majority of the present Christians belonged to the same stock, and held the same belief. When Nestorius and Eutyches were excommunicated, all those who adhered to their doctrines were nick-named after them by their opponents. In the East a community easily changes its name on joining another sect. The native Protestants at Mosul are now called 'Americans,' because they were converted by American missionaries. With the exception of a few Armenian families at Baghdad and Diarbekir, and some who are attached to the Greek Church at the latter place, the whole of the Christian community inhabiting the country above alluded to are divided into four different sects, having the same Chaldean and Assyrian origin; but they are now styled 'Chaldean Nestorians,' 'Chaldean Catholics,' 'Syrian Jacobites,' and 'Syrian Catholics.' The Nestorian community, reckoned at about fifty thousand families, occupy the southern part of Kurdistan, and the vicinity of Lake Oromia, in north-western Persia. The Chaldean Catholics number about thirty thousand families, and reside at Mosul, Baghdad, Diarbekir, Assyria, and southern Kurdistan, and northern Persia. The

Syrian Jacobites and Syrian Catholics are almost always to be found together, at Baghdad, in the vicinity of Mosŭl, at Mardin, Diarbekir, and the Toor Mountains, on the extreme south-western limit of Kurdistan. These Syrians are estimated not to exceed the Chaldean Catholics in parts of Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Kurdistan.

"The Patriarch of the Nestorian Chaldeans is styled 'Patriarch of the East,'[1] and resides at Kochannis, in Jolamarik, in Kurdistan. The Patriarch of the Chaldean Catholics is styled 'Patriarch of Babylon,' and resides at Mosul. It is not the case, as some historians assert, that the Patriarch of the Papal Chaldeans assumes the name of Joseph. The Christian name of the late Patriarch was Joseph. His two predecessors were called, the one Nicalous Zai, the other Yohanon. The Patriarch of the Syrian Jacobites styles himself 'Patriarch of the See of Antioch,' and assumes the name of his predecessors, 'Ignatius.' He resides either at Dair, or the Monastery of Zafaran, near Mardin, or at Diarbekir. The Patriarch of the Papal Syrians also styles himself 'Patriarch of the See of Antioch,' and besides adopts the name of his predecessors. His residence is at Mardin, overlooking the great plains of Mesopotamia.

"The Jacobites belong to that part of the Christian

[1] This is the oldest title of the Chaldean Patriarchs. East is not used in contradistinction to West, but a term applied to the country from whence man went forth to "replenish the earth."—*Vide* Gen. xxix; Num. xxiii. 7; Matt. ii. 1.

Church called Monophysite, that is to say, those who followed the doctrine of Eutyches, who lived in the fifth century, and believed that in Christ there was but one nature. Assemani, in order to avoid the appearance of following Eutyches, with whom they profess to have no connexion, cautiously defines their doctrine, denying all confusion and interruption of the two natures, and representing the nature of Christ, as being indeed one, yet at the same time compound, and double.

"The Monophysites are divided into four branches, the Jacobites, Armenians, Copts, and Abyssinians. The three last-mentioned sects retain the names of their nationalities. The Jacobites are called after Jacob Baradeus, the zealous defender of their faith in the sixth century, when it was nearly extinct.

"Mosheim gives this account of the Monophysite doctrine and constitution,—

"'Many, while careful to shun the fault of Nestorius, ran into the opposite extreme. The most noted of these was Eutyches, abbot of a certain convent of monks at Constantinople, from whom originated another sect, directly opposite to that of Nestorians, but equally troublesome and mischievous to the interests of Christianity; and which, like that, spread with great rapidity throughout the East, and acquired such strength in its progress, that it gave immense trouble both to the Nestorians and to the Greeks, and became a great and powerful community. In the year 448, Eutyches, now far advanced in years, in order more effectually to put down Nestorius, to whom he was a violent foe, ex-

plained the doctrine concerning the person of Christ in the phraseology of the Egyptians; and maintained that there was only one nature in Christ, namely, that of the Word, who became incarnate. Hence, he was supposed to deny the humanity of Jesus Christ, and was accused by Eusebius of Doryleum, before a council called by Flavianus, perhaps in this very year at Constantinople. And as Eutyches refused to give up his opinions at the bidding of this council, he was cast out of the church, and deprived of his office, and he, not acquiescing in this decree, appealed to a general council of the whole church.'

"And this is Mosheim's account of how the Monophysite doctrine was spread in the East,—

"'When the Monophysites were nearly in despair, and very few of their bishops remained, some of them being dead, and others in captivity, an obscure man, Jacobus, surnamed Baradeus, of Zanzalus, to distinguish him from others of the name, restored their fallen state. This indigent monk, a most indefatigable and persevering man, being ordained bishop by a few bishops who were confined in prison, travelled over all the East on foot, constituted a vast number of bishops and presbyters, revived everywhere the depressed spirits of the Monophysites, and was so efficient by his eloquence, and his astonishing diligence, that when he died, in the year 578, at Edessa, where he had been bishop, he left his sect in a very flourishing condition in Syria, in Mesopotamia, in Armenia, in Egypt, Nubia, and Abyssinia, and in other countries. He extinguished

nearly all the dissensions among the Monophysites, and as their churches were so widely dispersed in the East, that the Bishop of Antioch could not well govern them all, he associated with him a Maphrian, or primate of the East, whose residence was at Tagritum, on the borders of Armenia.

"'His efforts were not a little aided in Egypt and the neighbouring regions by Theodosius of Alexandria.

"'From this man, as the second father of the sect, all the Monophysites in the East are called Jacobites.'

"The present Chaldeans, whether Papal or Nestorian, keep to the Greek profession of faith, and consider it blasphemous to attribute to God Almighty the suffering of the cross.

"The so-called Syrian Jacobites and Syrian Catholics are not natives of Syria; the majority of the Christians in that country are Maronites, Greeks, and Armenians. The word Syrian, or Syrianne, as it is called in Arabic, is known in the East to denote a religious sect and not natives of any country in particular. Although some modern geographers have tried to define the limits of Syria yet it is a known fact that neither the Hebrews, nor the Greeks knew exactly the boundaries of Syria, or its language. In the English version of the Bible, and also in the Septuagint, the words Aram, and Aramaic, are rendered Syria, and Syriac, words which have no similarity to them either in sound or sense. It is conjectured by many authors that the word Syria is a corruption of Assyria, as it is mentioned by Herodotus

that 'The Assyrians were called by the Greeks Syrians.' As the Assyrians always spoke, and still speak, the Aramaic, and governed the whole country between the Euphrates and the Mediterranean it may be that the word Assyria, corrupted by the Greeks into Syria, became a general term for all who occupied the present Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Assyria, Syria, and the Holy Land, as the word Turkey is now applied to all those provinces, though the inhabitants are not Turks. The dubious rendering of the word Aram into Syria and Syriac in the English Bible is an error, because Laban and Jacob were called Syrians, which term cannot possibly apply to their nationalities.[2] The word Aramee must have been understood then as the term English is at the present day. The Anglo-Saxon race retains its language wherever it settles, whether in America, Canada, or Australia, and is even now distinguished by different names. If after one or two thousand years there were no chronological records of those countries to refer to, and the world had only to trust to vague histories written by a foreigner, chiefly from hearsay, it would not be easy to define the origin of the Americans, the Canadians, and the Australians.

"The Chaldean community considers itself, and rightly so, the most ancient as to nationality and Christianity. As regards nationality they hold that they are descended from the Chaldeans, or Assyrians, mentioned in Holy Writ; and with reference to their Christianity, the list of the names which composed the

[2] *Vide* Gen. xxxi. 20, 24; Deut. xxvi. 5, &c.

heads of the Church shows that their forefathers professed Christianity as early as the first century.

"It is just two hundred years since the Latin Church succeeded in establishing its principles amongst the Chaldeans. Its agents were very careful not to introduce any great change of dogmas at first, contenting themselves with getting the Chaldeans to acknowledge the Pope as the head of their Church.

"For a long time the Latins have been trying to introduce celibacy amongst the clergy of the Papal Chaldeans, and to do away with some of their peculiar rites. Pius the Ninth went so far as to prohibit the Patriarch from consecrating any more Bishops without the special approval and sanction of the Vatican. But the Patriarch for a time ignored the Papal Bull, and consecrated three Bishops contrary to its provisions.

"The Chaldean origin of the Chaldeans is denied by some who cannot show from what other stock the present Chaldeans really come. They cannot, however, help extending to them the ancient name of 'Assyrians,' because the land which they now inhabit was formerly called by that name. Yet they forget that especially at the end of the Assyrian monarchy, Chaldean and Assyrian were synonymous words, and the nation was sometimes known by one name, sometimes by the other, just as the words British and English are at the present day often used indifferently to signify the same people.

"The late Dr. Grant, a member of the American board of missions, who is well known for his philanthropy and Christian labours, published a work entitled

'The Nestorians, or the lost Tribes,' wherein he tries to prove that the existing Nestorians are the descendants of the 'dispersed of Israel.' He remarks on the word Chaldean in the following terms:—'Chaldean is a name commonly used to distinguish the Papal, but it is seldom applied to the orthodox historians; and when so applied, it is used to express their relation to Abraham, who was from "Ur of the Chaldees."'

"If the Nestorians are of the family of Abraham, who was a Chaldean, surely they themselves must also be Chaldeans.

"Then Messrs. Smith and Dwaight, two American missionaries, in their work entitled 'Researches in Armenia,' make the following comment upon the word Chaldean:—'The present Chaldean Christians are of recent origin. It was in A.D. 1681 that the Nestorian Metropolitan of Diarbekir having quarrelled with his Patriarch, was first consecrated by the Pope, Patriarch of the Chaldeans. The sect was as new as the office, and created for it. Converts to popery from the Nestorian and Jacobite churches were united in one body, and dignified by the name of the Chaldean church. It means no more than Papal Syrians, as we have in other parts Papal Armenians and Papal Greeks.'

"Whether this is a surmise, or the information was obtained from a source of any value, they do not show. If the latter, it is a pity they did not give their authority for such an extraordinary statement, because the Oriental Records in Rome will show that long before the era they assign when they say the Chaldeans of Diarbekir assumed

that name, letters still extant prove that the Nestorian Patriarchs and Bishops styled themselves Chaldeans, and besides, it is absurd to suppose that the Roman Pontiffs could or would give the national name of 'Chaldean' to a people who were not living in either Chaldea or Assyria.

"The Rev. G. P. Badger, in writing upon the Nestorians, touches also upon the point in dispute, and says in his 'Nestorians and their Ritual' (vol. i. page 180) :— 'When the Latin missionaries had succeeded in forming a schism among the Nestorians of Diarbekir, they wanted a name to distinguish the proselytes, and their Assyrian descent.' It is a pity that Mr. Badger did not give his authority for that supposition. As to the difficulty the Latin missionaries found in giving 'a name' to the Nestorian proselytes, he allows the Armenians, the Greeks, and even the Syrians to have a name for their nationalities, and yet the poor Nestorians have no nationality whatever, not even so much as the slaves who are imported from Circassia or Africa! We are also to believe that the important Chaldean community at Diarbekir could only boast of the name 'Sooraza' and 'Nestoraza,' two Chaldean words which mean Christian and Nestorian. With regard to the word 'Sooraza,' if Mr. Badger had examined it carefully, he would have found that it was used by peasants who spoke nothing but Chaldean, and as the natives of Diarbekir speak merely Arabic, the word 'Sooraza' would be foreign to them as much as 'Nestoraza.'

"All the Roman Catholic Chaldean peasantry only

speak vulgar Chaldean, whilst the respectable Chaldeans who inhabit the towns speak the language of the place, Arabic, Turkish, or Persian; and Chaldean is only used like the Latin in the Roman Catholic church. The peasantry call themselves 'Sooraza,' 'Mshakaza,' but they use these words to distinguish themselves from their Mohammedan neighbours, whom they style 'Coordai' and 'Tayaya.' The meaning of 'Tayaya' is Mohammedan, named after an Arab tribe called Tai, who live at the junction of the great Zab with the Tigris. The words 'Mshakaza' and 'Sooraza' are also applied by the Nestorians to all who profess Christianity; but the peasantry of the Papal Chaldeans use the term Sooraza for all Christians, but they limit the word Mshakaza to Roman Catholics.

"When I was at Faishapoor during my last visit to Mosul, living at the chief's house, my host was conversing in Chaldean with some guests about my family, and remarked that my two surviving brothers were 'Mshakaza,' but that I was Anglaizai (English). The poor man was quite confused when he discovered I understood what he said, and took him to task for saying that the English were not Christians.

"If Sooraza means Syrian, how can the Nestorians be so named, unless they are descendants of Aram, or migrated from Syria? In Chaldean and Arabic, Assyria is called 'Athur;' by the Hebrews it was called Asshur. The *th* has been corrupted into *s*, and in this sense I conclude, and not in its meaning of Syrian, the word 'Sooraza' has been used by the Chaldean-speaking

people to whom Mr. Badger alludes. It may be also that as the Fathers of the Church were called Syrians, the Orientals adopted the name to signify their Christian profession, as the term Nass-arah (Nazarene), applied to all Arabic-speaking Christians, subject to Mohammedan rule, signifies that they are followers of Jesus of Nazareth.

"Three ancient Arab historians, Yakoob Aboo, Alfoda, and Ibn Sayud, employ the word Athur: the first for Mosul and Mesopotamia, the second for Nimroud, and the third for Nineveh proper.

The followers of Nestorius often call themselves Nestorians, but that is merely to distinguish themselves from other sects, as a Wesleyan or Lutheran, if writing upon religion, may not think it improper to say 'we, Wesleyans,' or 'Lutherans.' The words could never be taken to mean nationalities. Moreover, as Protestants are not ashamed of the name which was given to them by their antagonists, neither did the Nestorians, I presume, object to a name given them in the same way. But why this doctrinal name should be forced upon them in the sense of a nationality when they are not connected with Nestorius, either in his nationality or patriarchate, is a mystery.

"Now let us see what ancient historians say with regard to the title of Chaldean, which is alleged to have been given by a certain Pope to the obscure people who are theologically called Nestorians.

"Bar Hebræus, who lived in the thirteenth century, writing of the Aramean language of the Chaldeans, says,

'There are three dialects of the Syrian tongue. First, the Aramean or Syriac, properly so called, which is the most elegant of all, and used in Mesopotamia, and by the inhabitants of Roha, or Edessa, of Haran, and the outer Syria. Second, the dialect of Palestine, spoken by the inhabitants of Damascus, Mount Libanus, and the inner Syria. Third, the Chaldee, or Nabathean, dialect, the most unpolished of the three, and current in the mountainous parts of Assyria, and in the villages of Irak and Babylonia.' Thus no less than five hundred years ago a Syrian historian mentions the very dialect of the Aramean language which is now used by the Chaldeans. We do not agree, however, with the Syrians that our Chaldean dialect is 'unpolished,' but on the contrary, we consider it the most euphonious of all the Aramean dialects.

"Assemani, another Syrian historian, refers to the Chaldean Nestorius as follows: he says, 'The Nestorians are not called by this name in the East, for they regard their doctrine as apostolic; and they had never any connexion with the person of Nestorius, but are generally called Chaldaic Christians, because their principal, or head church, is in the ancient Chaldea.'[3]

"The Chaldeans, Armenians, and Kurds, who now, as formerly, inhabit the mountainous country to the north of Nineveh, are mentioned in the Anabasis of Xenophon,[4] which account goes far to show that the very people who existed then exist now.

"In the Cyropædia, Book 3, chap. ii., Xenophon

[3] Vol. iii. p. 177.

[4] In Book 4, chap. iii.

gives the following account of the Chaldeans and Armenians:—

"'The next day Cyrus, taking Tigranes with him, and the best of the Median horse, together with as many of his own friends as he thought proper, rode round and surveyed the country, examining where he should build a fortress. Going up to a certain eminence he asked Tigranes what sort of mountains they were from which the Chaldeans came down to plunder the country. Tigranes pointed them out to him. He then inquired again, "And are hese mountains now entirely deserted?" "No, indeed," said he; "but there are always scouts of the Chaldeans there, who give notice to the rest of whatever they observe." "And how do they act," said he, "when they receive this notice?" "Just as each can." Cyrus gave attention to this account, and looking round, observed a great part of the Armenian territory lying deserted and uncultivated, in consequence of the war.'

"Again, 'The Chaldeans had each a shield, and two javelins; they are said to be the most warlike of all people in that part of the world. They serve as mercenaries, if any one requires their services, being a warlike people, and poor; for their country is mountainous, and but little of it yields anything profitable. As Cyrus's men approached the heights, Triganes, who was riding on with Cyrus, said, "Cyrus, are you aware that we ourselves must very soon come to action, as the Armenians will not stand the attack of the enemy?" Cyrus, telling him that he knew it, immediately gave orders to the Persians to hold themselves in readiness, as

they would have immediately to press forward, as soon as the flying Armenians drew the enemy down, so as to be near them. The Armenians accordingly led on; and such of the Chaldeans as were on the spot when the Armenians approached, raised a shout, and according to their custom ran upon them, and the Armenians according to their custom did not stand the charge.'

"Both Armenians and Kurds (Carduchians) inhabit the same country now, and why not the Chaldeans? The Armenians speak Armenian; the Kurds, Median or corrupt Persian; and the Chaldeans, Chaldean. Why are the two former tribes acknowledged without any dispute to be the descendants of the ancient Armenians and Carduchians, while people profess to doubt that the Chaldeans are descended from Chaldeans? Even in the present time the Chaldeans are considered a warlike people, and the Armenians the reverse, as they were in the time of Xenophon; why, then, should the Armenians be called Armenians, and the Chaldeans be set down as merely 'Nestorian'? All the Armenians, like the Chaldeans, profess Christianity, but the Kurds are Mohammedans like the Turks and Arabs.

"The Chaldeans speak the same language as the remarkable tribe of Sabeans—or Christians of St. John, as they are commonly called—who live near what was considered to be ancient Chaldea, and are generally supposed to be descendants of the old Babylonians and Chaldeans.

"The present Chaldeans speak, with a few variations, the same dialect as that used in the Targums, and in

some parts of Ezra and Daniel, which is called Chaldee. The Nestorians have no other tongue but this, and must have inherited it from their forefathers the Chaldeans, unless the ingenious critics can show that the Popes of Rome made the converted Nestorians adopt Chaldee when they bestowed upon them the national name of 'Chaldean.'

"The ten following words, which are pure Chaldean, are understood and pronounced at the present day by the Chaldeans as they were in old time:—Malchites, Yagar-Sahadutha, Rabshakeh, Gabrius, Nahr-Malka, Abram and Sarai, and Naharaina.[5]

"Malchites is the name given by the ancient Oriental Church to the Greek community, which means 'King-craft,' because their doctrine was supported by the Emperors of Constantinople.

"Yagar-Sahadutha was used by Laban when he made a league with Jacob, and means 'Heap of Witness.'

"Nahr-Malka is the name of a great canal which is mentioned by many ancient historians as existing in Babylon, and means 'Royal or King's River.'

"Naharaina is the name of Mesopotamia in Chaldean, and is found on the Egyptian monuments.

"Gabrius (Chaldean 'Gabria,' which means 'Man of God,') mentioned in Herodotus as being an Assyrian follower of Darius.

"Rabshakeh (Chaldean 'Rub-hasheeka,' which means the Mighty Lord or Mighty Prince) the Assyrian general who was sent by Sennacherib, and whom Elia-

[5] Gen. xxxi. 47.

kim and his companions asked to speak to them in the Syrian or Aramean language.[6]

"Abram and Sarai are Chaldean words, which mean, the first, 'Exalted Father,' and the second, 'My Lady.'

"I might quote hundreds of other words—besides the names of the months, days of the week, the heavenly host—and find, with few exceptions, that the names now used by the Chaldeans are the same as those mentioned by sacred and profane writers, as being in use before the Christian era.

"What greater proof can there be of the origin of a people than their language? and, certainly, the Chaldeans are as much entitled to be called by their name as the Jews, Armenians, Greeks, and Arabs, who now speak the language of their forefathers. The Assyrian or Aramenian language became the vernacular dialect of Mesopotamia, Syria, and the Holy Land after the Assyrian conquest. When the Arabians took possession of those countries, they established their language, which prevails there to the present day.

"Then, again, all the Chaldeans, whether Nestorian or Papal, keep strictly the three days' fast of what is called 'Ravatha-duainway,' or Supplication of Nineveh, which the Chaldeans assert to have been continued from the time the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonah. The Syrians, who must have belonged to the same stock as the Chaldeans, also keep the same fast, but not with the same devotional observances.

"Though, as I said before, Arabic is the vernacular

[6] Isaiah xli. 2.

language of Mesopotamia, Syria, and the Holy Land, yet, each ancient sect uses its national, or mother tongue, in its rituals and other ecclesiastical rites; but the Chaldeans in Upper Assyria and Kurdistan, as well as the Kurds, can only speak their own tongue. Official work all over the Ottoman dominions is carried on in Turkish.

"The language used by the Chaldeans is known in Europe as Syriac, but the Chaldeans call it Chaldean. They apply the word Syriac to the character used by the so-called Syrian or Jacobite. It is true there is very little difference between them, but there is some in the pronunciation of certain letters, the vowel-points, and in the formation of the letters, as much as there is between the Old English and Roman characters.

"Formerly, all the so-called Syrians employed the same writing, and pronounced every word as the Chaldeans do now; but, in the thirteenth century, Bar Hebræus, a promoter of the Jacobites, wishing to make a thorough distinction between the writing of the Monophysites and that of the Nestorians, changed the characters and the vowel-points.

"The Chaldean P and A are changed by the Syrian into Ph and O. For instance, the former pronounce our Lord's word Eppathaha, the latter call it Ephothoho. Such words as 'Marantha' (our Lord's coming), 'Abba' (Father), 'Talitha' (Damsel), 'Maria' (Lord), 'Allaha' (God), the Syrians pronounce Moronotho, Obbo, Toletho, Morio, and Olloho.

"Although the present Syriac writing was invented in the thirteenth century, Syrian scholars in England

disdain to call the old writing of the Chaldeans by any other name than 'Syriac.' Some have gone so far as to give to the old Chaldean character, which is said to have existed three hundred years before the Christian era, the extraordinary name of 'Syro-Chaldaic,' which is absurd.

"With regard to the doctrine of the so-called Nestorians, their enemies have so much exaggerated certain dogmas which were promulgated by Nestorians, that one might suppose the present Nestorians almost as great unbelievers as the Unitarians; whilst the only difference existing between them and the universal Catholic Church, and which has separated them from all other Christian sects for so many centuries, is merely a play upon words. They believe, as much as any orthodox Christian, in the Trinity in Unity, and the Unity in Trinity; and that 'The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'

"The fact is Eutychean heresy was so obnoxious to the Nestorian Church, on account of attributing to the Redeemer only one nature, and confounding the human with the Divine, tending thereby to the blasphemous conclusion that the Godhead suffered, that those who sympathized with Nestorius adopted such anti-Monophysite views as were construed by the Western Church into creating a wide distinction between the Divine and human attributes.' They profess that in Christ there are two natures, and two Persons, but one Parsopa; and although by attributing two Persons to our Saviour, against one Person as professed by the rest of the Christian world, yet they add one Parsopa, which really means one Person, in the sense in which it is understood

by those who call them heretics. The Nicene Creed is one of their articles of faith; and I think that is a proof of their belief in the unity of the two natures. With regard to the procession of the Holy Ghost, they agree with the Greek Church.

"Assemani gives this account of the first conversion of these people to Christianity:—

"'The Chaldeans, or Assyrians, received Christianity in the time of the twelve apostles—Peter, Thomas (St. Thomas the incredulous, and the Apostle of India), Bartholomew, Matthew, and Judas the son of James, and Thaddeus also called Lebbeus, Thaddeus of the seventy, and Mark and Aghdus, are called the Apostles of the Syrians and Chaldeans. Addus, or Adi, one of the seventy disciples, was sent into the East by St. Thomas, one of the twelve, and was martyred at Edessa under the son of the celebrated Abgareus, on his return from preaching in Persia, Assyria, and Babylonia. Mark, a disciple of Addus, proclaimed the Gospel in Babylonia, Assyria, and Persia. He fixed his residence at Ctesiphon and Seleucia, and is called first Bishop of Seleucia. Seleucia in this manner became the head of the Oriental Church. He died after a ministry of thirty-three years from A.D. 48 to 82. St. Thomas, whose surname, according to some, was Jude, not only was the Apostle of the Syrians and Chaldeans, but also of the Parthians, Persians, Medes, and Indians. It has been doubted whether St. Thomas himself ever penetrated into India.'

"Assemani again says, 'The Chaldeans constitute a

large Christian community, which has no connexion with others, have their own form of worship, their own bishops, and their own ecclesiastical councils. Their Church extends through all Asia, and exists partly in the Persian, partly in the Turkish, and partly in the Mogul Empires. The Patriarch resides in a monastery not far from Mosul, and has a great many bishops under him. The enmity of the Persians, afterwards of the Mohammedans and Saracens against the Romans, contributed much to further the spread of this sect; for they received all refugees from the Roman empire, and extended free protection to such Christians as were not tolerated in the Roman province, and whom of course they would not suspect of any understanding with the Romans. Ibas, Bishop of Edessa, was one of the greatest defenders of Nestorius among the Orientals, and on that account his Epistle to Marin, the Persian Bishop of Ardaschir, was rejected by some councils. But the chief persons among them were Barsumas, and his assistant Maanos. After the death of Barsumas, the Archbishop of Seleucia, Barbacus, became the head of the party, and from this time onward, the Patriarchs (Catholic or Jacobites), resided at Seleucia, until, under the caliphs, Baghdad and Mosul were selected for the purpose. This Barbacus held a council in the year 499, in which not only the whole Persian Church professed itself to belong to the Nestorian community, but regulations were also made, that all bishops and priests must be married, and second marriages of the clergy were not merely permitted but declared to be necessary.'

"Mosheim says of the 'Nestorians, also called Chaldeans,'—

"'It is to the honour of this sect, that of all the Christians resident in the East, they have preserved themselves the most free from the numberless superstitions which have found their way into the Greek and Latin Churches.'

"Though the unfortunate Nestorians have been persecuted, harassed, and even massacred by the thousand from the time they embraced Christianity, and very often their bitterest enemies were what I am ashamed to call Christians, yet their former exploits in preaching the Gospel of Salvation to the heathen far and wide, and their courage and fortitude hitherto in keeping themselves from the superstitious practices of different Christian sects around them, have well earned for them the title of 'Protestants of the East.'"

Thus far Mr. Rassam. He has made out a very strong case to prove that the Native Christians are the descendants and direct representatives of the old Chaldeans and Assyrians, and that their ancestors were converted to Christianity in the very earliest times. But we need not forget the interesting fact that the Moravian Jew, Benjamin II., who visited the Kurdish mountains in 1855, regarded the Jews whom he found there and the Nestorians as one race, having many things in common. There is a tradition in the mountains that the Nestorians were originally Jews, but had become converted to Christianity. It is very possible that after all the Nestorians are of mixed race, or rather that many frag-

ments of old races are now represented by the Nestorian sect; the Chaldean or Assyrian blood being, however, predominant. They are, unquestionably, as fine a people, physically, as are to be found anywhere; and their well-shaped heads and expressive features denote great natural intelligence. When education has done its work they will no doubt play an important part in building up a new civilization in the East.

CHAPTER X.

SOMBRE AMIDA.

Leaving Mardin—The white horse—The date-mark—Routes to Orfah and Diarbekir—A bad road—Heavy thunderstorm—An unsavoury village—The Turkish post—A demoniac-cry—Night in a post-house—Arrival at Diarbekir—Roman fortifications and churches—View from the citadel—The great mosque—Vandalism—The Governor-General—The political situation—The fez—As a military head-dress will probably be superseded—Visit to the great mosque—Armenian churches—Silver work—Watches.

When I was leaving the kindly missionaries on the morning of the 8th May, I had reason to feel that the unfavourable impression caused by my being in company with a couple of Circassians when I first presented myself, had by no means been effaced. The horse I came on was a bay, and the one the postmaster sent me to continue my journey happened to be white. Mr. Andrus's little daughters at once noticed that I was no longer on the horse I had when I arrived, and they came to the conclusion that I was indeed a Circassian, and that I was stealing their mother's horse, which was a white one. They looked quite disturbed and perplexed for a few moments, and then the elder girl, taking her courage in both hands, addressed me in a

tone of expostulation, and asked, "Why are you going away with mamma's horse?" When I replied that the horse was not her mamma's, she evidently thought that Circassians could tell lies as well as steal, and she ran into the house to expose the villainy before I got clear off with the animal. With what terror the children of the exposed villages must regard the Circassian colonists, when the evil reputation they have acquired has made such an impression on the imagination of children of Americans living in the security of a walled town!

During my brief rest at Mardin I made the acquaintance of Dr. Thom, the medical missionary, and learned from him a good deal about the Baghdad "date mark." He was himself a victim of the malady at the time, and he applied a lotion, of which nitric acid was the basis, to the affected part—the forehead—every few hours. But the application had not the slightest curative effect, and he said that he should be quite surprised if it had. One of the lady teachers had a more angry-looking ulcer on her temple, extending to the angle of the right eye, and for that the doctor, merely for the sake of doing something, applied iodine, as a matter of course without effect. Nothing seems to kill the fungoid growth which eats away the skin, short of severe cautery; but when that remedy is employed, the sore is sure to make its appearance in another place, and then instead of one ugly scar the victim has two. Indeed, sometimes he has a great deal more than two. A Frenchman of Baghdad had once no less than twenty date marks, all in course of formation at once, and for months he could not either

sit or lie down with any approach to comfort. He became quite emaciated, and nearly died of the visitation. But that was quite an exceptional case.

After leaving the city gates and regaining the high road to Diarbekir, we came upon two evidences of civilization which would have delighted a teetotaller—a drinking fountain, supplied from a spring with very cold and sparkling water, and an itinerant vendor of coffee close by, who makes a livelihood by selling it to wayfarers. We partook of both the water and the coffee, and rode on over very precipitous hills, our guide frequently abandoning the roadway to make short cuts.

For the traveller proceeding from Mardin westward to the coast at Scanderoon, the direct route would be westward to Orfah. But the intervening country is nearly a desert, and there are no villages or stations where the post-horses could be changed. It is therefore necessary to turn nearly due north to Diarbekir, which is situated at the apex of a triangle, having Mardin and Orfah at its southern and south-western angles. The road over the hills from Mardin to Diarbekir and beyond is in some places well made, but for the greater part it is almost impassable, being composed of blocks of basalt thrown together without any attempt at macadamizing. Consequently, the horses have to keep clear of the road for the greater part of the way, and it might as well have been left unmade.

When we set out from Mardin a great thunderstorm was in progress over some of the hills in the neighbourhood, but it seemed to recede as we went forward, leaving

the ground everywhere saturated by rain. Our first station was Kanikee, nine hours distant, and we hastened on to that village for the sake of shelter. But when we arrived there, it proved to be so unutterably filthy and miserable, green stagnant water covering what might be meant for streets, and overflowing into the squalid huts, that I determined to push on to another village, of which the zaptiehs told us, some eight miles further. At two o'clock we overtook the storm. The hail came down with uncomfortable force, frightening the horses, and making them very unwilling to go on. The ground was whitened with the hailstones, which were large and angular. For three-quarters of an hour we rode hard against the pitiless pelting, and then came to the banks of a river much swollen by the rain, and therefore difficult to ford. A little wetting more or less did not then, however, make any difference, and I got over the river with the water half-way to my knees. We made for the village, and found it to be nearly as uninviting as Kanikee; but it was impossible to go on. In a long mud building, the best half of which was a stable, there proved to be a large fireplace, and that offering a chance of drying my drenched garments, I put up there for the night. A big fire of wood only partially wet, was made in the course of the afternoon, and though there was not a window in the place, and the doorway opened into another stable, I was glad of the warmth and the shelter.

The head-man of the village was ailing and old, and he came in to see me, and provided me with a mattress to sit upon on the mud floor. We sat there together and

hob-nobbed very comfortably, the flickering light of the crackling logs enabling us to see one another. I gave him a cup of tea, which he declared to be very good, and then asked me if I would not give him a dose of medicine, as he felt far from well. I regretted then for the first time that my little assortment of medicines, carefully packed as they were in a pretty morocco leather case, had been the first property stolen from me after leaving Baghdad. I explained the reason of my inability to comply with the kahia's request, but he evidently doubted the story, and in a few minutes rose and went away, thinking me a churlish fellow, who would not give a dose of physic to save a man's life.

As the evening wore on there was a lull in the storm, and presently I heard a great bustle in the village. Going out, I saw the post-carrier with the mail-bags from Constantinople for Mosul and Baghdad. The horses were completely done up, and so were the seven men who rode them. The post-bags were made of thick leather, of great weight and solidity, and they were full to bursting. Each horse had to carry a pair. Two bags of specie were on a mule, which had the lightest load. The bags and the specie were lifted off by three or four of the villagers and carried into the place where I had taken up my quarters. The horses were driven into the stable communicating with it, and presently in came the "post" himself, a powerful young Turk, the very model of an athlete. This was his first journey. His father had been on the route for years; but now, growing old, the son succeeded him. His big muscles were stiff

from the unwonted exercise, and he threw himself on a mattress placed for him near the fire with a grunt of relief. A couple of large coffee dishes of pillau and rice were brought in to him about half an hour after his arrival, and he then found time and energy to unbuckle a couple of horse-pistols and lay them aside preparatory to taking his dinner. There must have been at the very least four pounds of food on each of the dishes; but he made short work of the whole, and wound up his meal with about a quart of buttermilk taken off at two draughts. He then lighted a cigarette, and had a smoke, and some coffee having been brought in for himself and me, we took our coffee together. But he was too tired for conversation. He merely said that the weather, as he came along, had been very bad, and then lying back on his mattress, fell fast asleep and snored heavily. In four hours he was awoke up, and putting on the belt in which his pistols were secured, strode out to continue his journey. It is popularly said that these men never sleep for five days at a stretch, while carrying the mail bags from the capital to Baghdad, but that is, I believe, an exaggeration. They always get the best horses for themselves, and they frequently ride on in advance of the heavy mails, and thus get six or eight hours sleep at the stages where they are supposed only to get three or four hours, if any. In theory they ought to be in the saddle from the time they leave the capital till they arrive at their destination, sleeping only on horseback; but though a good approach is made to that ideal, it is not altogether attained in practice.

From the necessities of the case, these people are unmerciful to their horses. They all carry long, heavy whips, which they wield from long practice with the most cruel effect. Instead of spurs, they use the pointed edge of the eastern stirrup, which must be more "rousing" than any spur. They animate the poor tired beasts besides by a terrible sustained yell, which has something demoniac in its piercing, mocking sound. The one thing unmistakably "anti-human" in Asiatic Turkey is that thin, shrill, falsetto cry. The horses know it well; they know, too, what it usually preludes, and when they are ready to drop with exhaustion they make a desperate plunge forward upon hearing it. The post-horses at the different stations, when tranquilly eating their corn, prick up their ears at this cry, sent forth like the shriek of a railway whistle as a signal that the mail is at hand, and they stop feeding and tremble in every limb. They understand perfectly what is in store for them, and are possessed with an exceeding great fear. But after all their lot is not so much more deplorable than that of the men who ride them almost to death, and then, without stop or stay, get on other horses and ride again, and so on again and again for days and nights in succession. The horses have, at all events, intervals of rest after every stage.

On the 9th May, in the early morning, I set out from the village where I had passed the night. The hills all around are covered with good grass, but they are quite destitute of trees and shrubs. The weather was now that of a cold and wet English spring; the glass was at

57° in the shade; and when the wind came sharply down a gorge, the blast was decidedly unpleasant.

After winding for some hours amongst the hills, we begin to descend a few hundred feet, and then come once more in sight of the Tigris. The great river is here neither very broad nor very rapid. It flows between high banks, of which the hills themselves often form part. Kelleks from Diarbekir, laden with large jars, enamelled green, float past, for the Mosul and Baghdad markets.

We soon get a view of "Kara Amida," built on the level top of a hill about a mile square, and eighty or a hundred feet higher than the bed of the meandering river. In the distance the Roman walls and towers which surround the city look black and grim, justifying the epithet "Kara," which the Turks apply to the sombre town. But when seen close at hand the basalt of which the walls are built are found to be a dark grey rather than black. Above the fortifications are seen the tall and graceful minarets of the Turkish mosques and a number of square Roman church towers which have survived the vicissitudes of centuries, and in most cases outlasted the churches to which they were attached. They owe their preservation to the fact that the Mohammedan conquerors turned them to account as minarets, placing little round towers on the top where the muezzins walk when calling the faithful to prayer.

The road to the city, after we emerge from the hills, winds along the river bank for nearly two miles. Many kelleks, or rafts, are preparing to start for Mosul, but

none of them are as large as those which go from that city to Baghdad, for the Tigris gets broader and more navigable further to the south, where it is swollen by the Zab and other affluents. The price of a raft, or rather the cost of a passage on one from Diarbekir to Baghdad, is usually four pounds; a little cabin or shanty being built on it for the traveller's comfort, without extra charge. When the river is near the flood the voyage occupies but five days, a voyage without shock or motion; for when there is a sufficient depth of water, the rafts are easily guided and kept clear of the banks, and the motion is as imperceptible as that of a balloon through the upper air. The kellek glides—

> "Adown the stream
> Gently,—as we sometimes glide
> Through a quiet dream!"

If it were not so the cargoes of green jars piled up upon their floor-like surface would stand but a small chance of arriving whole at their destination, for they are not tied or fastened in any way.

About a mile from the city there is a substantial stone bridge over the river, and it is clear at a glance that one half of it is Roman and the other Turkish. The difference in style and workmanship could not be more pronounced. The Roman arches are broad and solid, looking as if they were intended to last for ever. They are in excellent preservation. But those of Turkish construction are very inferior both in size and design, the bridge narrowing to nearly half its original width

where they are interpolated amongst the broader Roman arches.

Upon entering the city through the southern Roman gate, I found myself in a straight and tolerably broad street, leading right across the city to a corresponding gate on the north side. The gateway is flanked by circular towers of great height, built of large blocks of a dark grey basalt. The city is also of stone, and the bazaars are crowded and busy.

As I make my way along, I notice that the street dogs are curiously enough all black, instead of being the usual tan colour of the canine scavengers of the East. I have already referred to the proverb which takes note of this fact, asserting that the mountains, the walls, the dogs, and the hearts of Diarbekir are all black.

The city is still a great centre of commerce, though the Persian trade, which was formerly its main support, is not now a tithe of what it was. The Russians have diverted much of the Persian trade to the Caspian route by the superior facilities which they offer. But in spite of this, Diarbekir is pretty flourishing, though there are fears for its future, especially now that things are likely to go very badly with Erzeroum, with which city the Sombre Amida has hitherto carried on a large caravan trade. The jewellers of Diarbekir are noted for their skill in filagree work, but their bazaar is not at all so flourishing as it was a few years back.

The population of the town is about 60,000, of whom rather more than half are Christians. The Armenians are the most numerous of the Christian sects. The

Armenian Protestant Church, of which the Rev. T. Boyajian is the pastor, numbers a congregation of eight hundred souls—a very large number when it is considered that the church in question was founded only twenty-five years ago by the American missionaries. The Roman Catholics have also a strong mission, and, as usual, the best school in the town. There is a small body of orthodox Greeks, some of whom have gone over to Rome; and also a few Chaldeans and Syrians. The Mussulmans are said to be very sour and fanatical, and the Christians, though the more numerous body, are by no means altogether at their ease, for the Turks and Kurds, who form the Mussulman population, are said to be all armed. However, great confidence I was informed, is felt in the Governor-General, Abder Rahman Pasha, who is a very enlightened man, and will not tolerate any outrages upon the Christians. They are said to be very favourably regarded by him, and that fact makes him by no means popular with the genuine Diarbekirli Moslems.

Soon after my arrival, I proceeded to the bureau of the Government Telegraph Office, having a letter of introduction to Count A. Pisani, the Director of the European Telegraph Department. He is a nephew of Count Pisani, who for forty years past has been Keeper of the Archives of the British Embassy at Constantinople. I found him a very accomplished gentleman and energetic official, and marvelled much how such a man could bring himself to live in such a place, cut off completely from European refinement and associations.

He has indeed the advantage of being in telegraphic communication with the centres of civilization, and he was able to give me the "Public News," as it is called, a *précis* of all recent events of importance, which showed me that the predictions of immediate hostilities between England and Russia had not been borne out by the result. It will be remembered that at Baghdad I was forewarned by divers friends that if I ever got so far as Diarbekir, I should there, at all events, find my journey brought to an untimely end, and that the least I might expect was to be put on a kellek, and sent down the river to Baghdad. The "Public News," in spite of the English name, is written in French, and every pasha and government official of any position gets a copy. The different consuls are also favoured with a sight of it, and, in the absence of newspapers, it is sought for daily with great eagerness.

Mr. Boyajian, the pastor of the Armenian Protestants, very kindly took me to his house, which was very large and well built, being much more European in style than any house at Mosul or Baghdad. The domestic architecture of Diarbekir is decidedly in advance of that of the more eastern and southern towns. In the course of the afternoon Mr. Boyajian and Count Pisani took me to see some of the sights of the town. We went first to the citadel, which is now in ruins, the dilapidation looking as if it were of comparatively recent date. Entering the outer works through a fine arch, we see sculptured on the walls the Roman eagle pouncing on the Persian lion. The eagle has been more or less ill-

used, doubtless by the victorious Persians, who twice took the town and put its inhabitants to the sword, but the outline is still quite apparent. The citadel itself was built on a large artificial hill and must have been a place of great strength. Nestling close under its immense bastions were three Christian churches, one of which is still in almost perfect preservation. It is used as an armoury by the Turks. The crown of one of its two large domes has fallen in, but in every other respect it is intact. Another and a finer church close by is a hopeless ruin. It was converted into a powder-magazine, and a few years ago the powder exploded, and blew its dome and massive pillars into fragments, which now remain to show how deplorable has been the loss. A little chapel close by has fallen in within the last two years. Until then it was perfect, and the frescoes on the walls retained their colour. We could trace the faint outline of figures on the plaster of the walls still standing, but the colour has been washed out by the rains of two winters.

We clambered to the summit of the citadel, and enjoyed a splendid view of the city and the surrounding hills, with the winding Tigris making its way eastward. The line of the Roman fortifications is still complete and looks very imposing. The bastions are very close together, and are of great strength. The walls are so thick that grass is sufficiently abundant on their summits to pasture donkeys. How the animals could get up amongst the battlements I could not see, but there they were. I suppose there were inclines for the garrison

to enable the soldiers to line the works speedily, and no doubt the adventurous donkeys got up by the remains of those inclines. On some parts of the walls are good-sized houses, now for the most part uninhabited, and said to be haunted. They are, it appears, turned sometimes to a bad account, being made the trysting-places of Mohammedan women and Armenian youths. No doubt accidents have occurred to people who happened to enter houses and discovered sufficient to compromise two lives. To die by a stroke of a dagger, or to be pitched backwards over the lofty wall, might not improbably be the fate of those who had thus come to know too much, and the notion that no one could enter one of the haunted houses and live would thus very soon spread abroad.

Without the fortifications the country is very broken and hilly; the Karanjah, or black mountain, to the westward, is gloomy and forbidding. While we are looking at it a thunderstorm has gathered over its black summit, on which are broad patches of snow unmelted, although we are now in May. The Tigris flows at a great depth underneath the city walls which crown the hill, along the base of which the river winds.

Within the walls the great mosque, which is of unknown age, having been a Christian church before it was a mosque, and a pagan temple before it was a Christian church, is conspicuous near the centre of the city. There is another mosque which was permitted to remain a Christian church until one unlucky day, three hundred years ago, when a pasha, riding through the

town, heard the congregation singing a hymn, and being offended at the sound, ordered the building to be taken from its rightful owners and made over to the moulahs. Thirteen minarets scattered over the town diversify its outline very artistically; five of them were once the adjuncts of Roman churches. A sixth of these square Christian towers fell not long ago, and it is to be feared that some of those still remaining will fall too, if they are not repaired in time. I have mentioned the fine arch under which one passes in approaching the citadel; that is most certainly doomed to perish very speedily, unless it be strengthened at once; but I am afraid there is not much likelihood of any local board of works taking the trouble to do anything of the kind. I am told that within the last three years a Roman arch of equally fine proportions was actually taken down by the local authorities, to get material for the building of some wretched little office, which might just as well have been made of old brick. I am inclined to suspect that the ruin of the citadel is due to the fact that it has been made a quarry for stone required for building purposes. Seeing that the whole country around is one vast quarry, ready to yield stone enough to build a hundred Diarbekirs, this Vandalism is without the shadow of excuse.

The next day I paid a visit to his Excellency Abder Rahman Pasha, the "Servant of the Most Merciful." He is a very clear-headed and, I think, able man, quite free from prejudices. He understands French, but is afraid to commit himself by speaking it continuously;

he used Turkish for the most part during the interview, Count Pisani translating it into French. On the divan was a French dictionary, which showed that his Excellency desires to improve his knowledge of that language.

After some inquiries about my journey the wali said that he was afraid I had visited the country at a moment when a favourable impression could scarcely be formed of it. The war had drained the provinces of everything; there were few troops to keep order among the badly disposed, and there was no money to make repairs in public buildings, or do many other things equally necessary.

I said that, of course, the exhaustion consequent on a great war could not fail to make itself felt throughout the empire, and great allowance should be made for the shortcomings inevitable at such a time.

His Excellency remarked that one could only do the best that circumstances permitted; if it had not been for the war things would not be at all so bad. He then went on to discuss the situation produced by the reverses of the late war. He spoke without any bitterness of the Russian exactions, but it was clear that he understood well enough the object which the conquerors had in view in making such a merciless use of their success. He seemed to have no illusions, but looked at things as they were. The fact that troops had been brought from India to the Mediterranean was of course known to him, and he asked many questions as to the probable intentions of the British Government in making that demonstration. The number of men sent seemed to him to be

very inconsiderable, considering the strength of the Russian forces, especially as the armies of the Sultan were no longer what they were when Plevna still held out. Why did not the British intervene then? and the Ottoman troops would have been there to fight with them. The Russians would certainly have been defeated, perhaps destroyed, for even single-handed the Osmanlis beat them on several occasions. Now England will try and supply the place of the Osmanli troops with the native troops from India. What is the number of her native army?"

I gave him the number, but added that in India there was a population of two hundred millions to draw upon; that some of the races of that country were as warlike, and as strong, physically, as any on the face of the earth; and that England had resources in wealth and in power of organization which would enable her, if the necessity arose, to put half-a-million, or if that were not sufficient, a million of the picked men of the peninsula in the field to defend her allies and her interests in the East.

"Well," said his Excellency, "you may be able to get unlimited numbers of those men, and they may be very good in a campaign in a hot country like their own, but could they stand the cold of a winter near the Black Sea? I doubt it. The cold there is often so great that even our own men are frozen; they can scarcely stand the climate. I believe the Russians even, who come from the north and are accustomed to frost and snow, can hardly endure the cold on the Danube and on the

shores of the Black Sea in some winters. How could men from India stand exposure in such a climate?"

This question showed that the Governor-General was in the habit of considering very carefully all the elements of a problem. In answer to it I said that the troops raised in Arabistan, which has for half the year at least fully as warm a climate as India, are always employed by the Turkish Government in Armenia, or on the Danube, in times of invasion, and it had not been found that they were to any serious extent less capable of enduring the rigour of the winter than the natives of Anatolia or Kurdistan. It was quite true that the inhabitants of the warmer parts of India might be unable to stand a severe climate, but in the north of the peninsula there were hardy races, quite as capable of braving the inclemency of the season as the people of Arabistan, and perhaps the people of Asia Minor.

The Pasha replied that it might turn out to be so, and the experiment was one which might very well be tried. But, he added, it is something quite new; troops from India have never been brought so far north before. Have they ever fought European troops? Could they fight the Russians man to man?

It was evident that Abder-Rahman Pasha was not inclined to take things on trust. Nevertheless, he evidently wished well to England in this business; though he entertained doubts of the value of the Indian contingent, he seemed to have considerable respect for her power in other directions, and spoke of her naval resources as placing her beyond the reach of all enemies.

Before leaving his Excellency, I asked whether there would be any objection to my visiting the great mosque, for I was desirous of seeing it on account of its great antiquity. He said there could be no possible objection, provided I went after the mid-day prayers were over, and before those at three began; for it happened to be Friday, and a great many worshippers would be in the building at the hours of prayer. A captain of the gendarmerie was sent for, and told to escort me to the mosque about two o'clock, when the building would be empty. I thanked the wali, and returned to Mr. Boyajian's house.

Mr. Boyajian advised me to wear a fez when going to the mosque, so as to escape observation. In Diarbekir he said, everybody wore the fez; he himself, and M. Pisani, as well as the rest. In that way, when passing casually through the streets, no one could tell whether they were Moslems or Christians, for all officials and persons of the better class had European clothes, the only distinction being that they invariably wore the fez. Europeans could thus easily pass in the crowd by wearing a fez too. I sent at once for a fez merchant, and he brought half-a-dozen, from which I made choice of one that fitted me. Then I sent for a vendor of tassels, and I was soon provided with a long tassel of black silk of the prevailing fashion. These two purchases made, I had to send fez and tassel to a man whose trade it is to block fezes, and give them the correct shape, and insert the tassel artistically. I afterwards learned that nearly every town has its own peculiar shape for the fez, and in Con-

stantinople I was at once detected as a Diarbekirli when I wore the head-covering I purchased in that town. To western eyes there is no perceptible difference between one fez and another, but in the East a man's habitat is betrayed by some almost inperceptible peculiarity in its blocking.

When my new fez was brought back shaped and tasselled, and hot from the blocker's iron, I very naturally became interested in the subject of this modern Turkish head-gear, and made some inquiries as to the reason why it had so completely superseded the turban. I could get no satisfactory information on the point. The thick red felt, closely adhering to the head, is by no means comfortable; it heats the head, without bestowing any compensating protection either from sun or rain. When the sun's rays fall upon it, the European wearer feels as if his head was in a fiery furnace, and when the rain descends, his fez becomes a wet sponge, and the source of many tiny rivulets which flow down the back of his neck inside his clothes. Baker Pasha afterwards told me that he and the other British officers in the Turkish service all wore the fez, and they found the heat so unbearable, that to avoid sun-stroke they at one time covered the red over with a couple of folds of white calico. This made them a mark for Russian sharp-shooters, and finding that they were specially aimed at, they changed the white covering for a grey one, which was, of course, less conspicuous. The fez, as a head-dress for soldiers, has nothing whatever to recommend it, and from what I heard at Constantinople, I

would not be surprised to find that it is very soon superseded by something which will be a real protection to the head in sun and rain. It does not even possess the quality which one who has never worn it might feel inclined to imagine that it possessed—that of sticking on to the head in a high wind. It is very easily blown off, for it has no real grasp of the scalp on which it rests. It gives no protection to the eyes. The Turkish War Office would have discarded it long ago for a cap with a peak, but for the objection of pious people that a peak would prevent the soldier, when saying his prayers, from touching the ground with his forehead. But there is nothing in the Koran prescribing head-gear, because, if never removed, it would interfere with a man desirous of saying his prayers properly. It is therefore thought that the reformers will eventually carry the day, and the fez will give way to the kepi. The simple order, "Reverse peaks," when going to prayers will reconcile the exigencies of the faith of Islam with the comfort and the health of the brave soldiers who shed their blood so freely in its defence.

Having put on my newly-acquired fez, I sallied forth into the streets, where I was glad to find that I escaped observation much better than earlier in the day; and Count Pisani and the officer and I went to the great mosque. Passing from one of the busiest streets through a large gateway, we found ourselves in a rectangular space, with the long façade of the mosque on one side, and the other three sides surrounded by the remains of handsome arcades and buildings of consider-

able size, elaborately carved marble columns supporting their entablatures. In some places only the fronts of the buildings remain. This was no doubt the forum of the Roman city. Cufic inscriptions were cut in prominent parts of most of the buildings, doubtless by the early conquerors; but they do not suffice to change the general aspect of the great quadrangle.

The structure which is now a mosque, but was originally a heathen temple, is manifestly of a much older date than the others. It is austerely plain, being built of dark basalt and without a column or pilaster to break the monotonous lines of its long front. A fountain, with a spacious basin, occupies the middle of the great quadrangle, and several persons having the appearance of pilgrims, were washing their feet in the water. There were very few people about, and no notice was taken of us.

We were at once invited to enter the mosque by the attendants, when we went up to the door. They did not even ask us to remove our boots. The interior of the building is divided into three long aisles by a series of great round arches strong enough to carry an aqueduct, but of no pretensions to lightness or elegance. There is an upper row of smaller arches which give the interior the unmistakable Roman look. The aisles run east and west. The nave, which is very lofty, is north and south, and is by no means long in proportion to the aisles, the disproportion somewhat marring the general effect. The place where the altar once was, is on the south. The walls are now all whitewashed, with some hideous daubs of flowers in red, blue, and yellow here and there on the

massive piers. The floor is covered with prayer-carpets, which do but little to relieve the somewhat dreary aspect of the great building, once doubtless warmed and adorned by great frescoes which the whitewash has superseded.

There are several Armenian churches of considerable pretensions in Diarbekir, this being the first city which I had yet visited where that community forms an important element in the population. I visited the church of the Armenian Protestants and found it to be well-built and convenient, with a handsome dome over the centre. The men occupy the lower part of the building exclusively, and the women the galleries; the sexes being as rigorously kept apart in this Protestant Church as in those of the other Christian communities in the east.

I had an opportunity of examining some of the silver work for which Diarbekir is famous, and found it to be very solid in make, and the style of ornamentation simple and effective. It is not, however, at all comparable in artistic design or high finish to the silver work of Kutch. The jewellers of Diarbekir are, it is said, falling off greatly in skill, owing, probably, to the decreasing demand for their handiwork. I did not notice either here or in any other Turkish town a watchmaker's shop; I presume the art of making watches has not as yet been introduced into the country. All well-to-do people seem to have watches, but all that I saw were of European manufacture. How they are repaired when they get out of order is a mystery. In Smyrna, some Swiss watchmakers, or, rather watchmenders, have established themselves, and they seem to do a very fair business.

CHAPTER XI.

WESTWARD TO THE EUPHRATES: UR OF THE CHALDEES.

Leave Diarbekir for Orfah—A recalcitrant horse—The Black Mountain—A Turk from Schipka—His opinion of Turkish officers—"Turkey must do what Russia tells her"—A Kurdish village—The galled jade—Suarick—The Turk and the Kurd—A fair fight—Ur of the Chaldees—Rock-cut chambers—Job's granaries—The city of Orfah—The telegraph office—The French Vice-consul—A refugee from Roumelia—Curious legend—Miraculous fish—Abraham's cradle—Rebecca's well—The black tents—Charmulk—Cultivated country—Birijik—The Euphrates once more—An Armenian post-contractor—Crossing the river—Camels fording.

Having paid a visit to the French Consul, M. Pons—there is no English Consul at Diarbekir—and another to an Englishman who represents an European house and buys wool largely in the surrounding districts, I felt I had done my duty by all the Europeans in the place, and turned my face to the south-west for Orfah. I set out on the 11th May. The horses sent by the post-master were execrable. The one which was saddled for me refused with wonderful resolution to go forward an inch; but he ran backwards up the street with great speed, and the more I spurred and flogged him, the more rapidly he retreated. I gave up this contest after I had

got tired of its novelty, and insisted on the surajee changing horses with me. He refused for a time, until the uselessness of refusal became manifest; then he mounted my discarded steed, saying anybody could ride him. The vain boast was scarcely out of his mouth when he was thrown off ignominiously, and he had to walk through the streets leading the horse. I found out next day that the unfortunate horse's back had a hole as large as a man's hand worn into it by some misfitting saddle, but the large saddle-cloth concealed that fact at the time. Outside the gates of Diarbekir, however, the brutal surajee, having room and verge enough, jumped on the poor brute's back and made good his position, laying on the whip with unmerciful strength. The horse gave in, and carried him at a very good pace the remainder of the afternoon.

The post stage from Diarbekir to Suarick is about fifty-five miles long; a distance much too great to be accomplished with any satisfaction on the same horses, even if they were fairly good. What made the matter worse was, that all the horses in these parts are in May fed upon green grass, and they have no strength or endurance. I often wished to provide barley at my own cost for the miserable animals, but none was to be had at the outlying stations or in the villages. Half an hour after setting out, the grass-fed horses began to get tired, and it was a most wearisome struggle to keep them going for the remainder of the way. Of course, under such circumstances, it was impossible to push on the whole way to Suarick in one march. It was settled that we

should seek the hospitality of a Kurdish village for the night, some twenty-five miles from the city.

Some eighteen miles from Diarbekir, right athwart our path, is the Karanja Dagh, or Black Mountain, which I had already descried from the top of the old Roman citadel. There is a very tolerable road over this mountain, and the ascent was not very difficult. At the top we find that an extensive plateau extends for some miles north, south, and west, and that it consists for the most part of good grazing-land, with patches of wood in the hollows. The snow is still lying deep in depressions sheltered from the direct rays of the sun, and the wind blowing over it is unpleasantly cold.

As the Black Mountain is a reputed haunt of robbers, I was not sorry to have our little party reinforced upon commencing its ascent by a stout young Turk riding a very good horse, who frankly stated that he heard I was going on to Orfah and Birijik with zaptiehs, and that he proposed to come with me if I had no objection, so as to enjoy the protection to be derived from travelling in so numerous a company. He was dressed like a Frank; but he wore a fez, around which he had tied a large white towel to keep the wind from his side face. He entered very freely into conversation, and said that he had a house at Schipka until the Russians came and took everything. Like everybody else, he had, he said, to leave the place to save his life, and as he had some friends in Diarbekir he made his way to that town. He was then on his way to a place south of Birijik, where he hoped to find something to do.

The complete freedom from restraint and prejudice with which this Turk, evidently of the lower bourgeois class, discussed the events of the war and criticized the faults of the Turkish commanders, which, in his view, led to the disasters, struck me as something very remarkable. It is true I had heard Mussulmans at Baghdad and elsewhere talk very freely about such matters, but they were always more or less sure of the discretion of their hearers, and besides, they were not Turks; but this young fellow of five and twenty, cool-headed, and evidently of some education, spoke without any hesitation before several persons whom he had never seen before, and gave his opinion as if it was the most ordinary thing in the world to express disapproval of the conduct of the higher powers. It was noticeable that, although he had been personally a loser by the successes of the Russians, he did not waste a single expression in condemnation of their doings. When they came to Schipka he lost his house: that was all he cared to say about them. The real blame, he clearly felt, was due to the incompetent Turkish commanders, who let them come. He seemed to me to put his finger on the central fault of the Turkish officials, whether military or civil, when he said the officers were not methodical in the business they had in hand. They do their business, said he, by fits and starts; when they like to do it, they do it; and when they are tired or lazy, they don't do it at all. If a thing has to be done, they imagine it is all the same whether it is done to-morrow or next week. If an order be given and is neglected, it is only necessary to make

an excuse of any kind, and the neglect is not visited with punishment. The Franks, he said, are not in the habit of doing things in that way, They are very severe, and will even shoot men for disobeying orders and leaving things undone that they are sent to do. The Turkish officers took no trouble to see that their men were properly fed and housed; they let them do the best they could, without taking any trouble in the matter. The soldiers died of hunger and exposure as well as from the Russian bullets.

I asked him whether he thought the Turks were strong enough to win in the Bulgarian campaign if they had been properly led?

He said he thought at one time they might; the Russians were not strong in the beginning, and that was the time the bad management of the Turkish officers destroyed everything. But the Russians, he continued, have great numbers of soldiers away in the north; there is no telling how many soldiers they have got. As fast as ten thousand of the Muscovites were killed, the Czar sent forty thousand to take their place. The Turks got men up in great numbers from Kurdistan and Arabistan to help those in Roumelia and Bulgaria; but what could be done against so many? I go along here, said he, with my servant, and I can fight one or two robbers well enough; but if a dozen come, I can only ask them what they want, and give it to them. So it is now with Turkey. She must ask Russia what she wants, and give it to her, for she cannot fight her any more by herself. If England or France helped her, of course it would be

different, just as it would be if you helped me against the Arabs. But the Muscovs are too strong for Turkey now to fight them alone, and she must do what they tell her.

The ultimate conclusion of this Turk, that now that Russia has proved herself altogether too powerful to be safely resisted, the only thing left to be done is to ask her what she wanted, so that it might be given to her, was not so different from that of the Arab merchant at Bahrein, who said that "Turkey should do as Persia did, say 'I am not strong enough to fight you, so give your orders!'" The Oriental bows very readily to the decrees of fate.

We put up that evening at a large encampment of Kurdish villagers, a few miles from Kanakee, the post station. The Kurds received us very well, and I was accommodated with a sleeping-place under the raised flap of one of the black tents. A partition of reeds, about four feet high cut off the space allotted to me from the body of the tent where the family slept. A heavy dew fell at night and saturated everything; but I was covered with a felt quilt nearly an inch thick, which kept out both wet and wind very fairly. This was a very large encampment, and great flocks of sheep were kept together within its boundaries by splendid Kurdish dogs. I passed the night on the whole very comfortably, in spite of the cold and the want of shelter on three sides of my sleeping apartment.

At daybreak on the 12th May, we prepared to mount after a hurried breakfast, in which warm sheep's milk took the place of tea. The horse which refused to

go forward with me at Diarbekir had kept so well in front afterwards under the whip and goad of the surajee, that the dragoman chose it for his own use, and had his Persian saddle put on it. When he mounted the galled back, he made the unlucky horse give a terrific jump into the air, and when it came down it fell and severely hurt the too venturesome Yusef. This catastrophe frightened the other horses, and they stampeded; it was a full hour before they were caught, and all made right once more. When the saddle was taken off the fallen horse, I saw what an open sore existed on his loins. But the surajee put his saddle on him, and after a brief struggle, succeeded in mounting the poor animal, and he rode him well in front for the rest of the stage.

The road continued, but it was for the most part too bad for use; we rode alongside of it. We were fifteen miles from Suarick when we started in the morning, and the route lay for the most part among hills. A range of mountains came into view to the west, snow lying in masses on two-thirds of their height. The hill which we traversed immediately before coming to Suarick was covered with vineyards, and the culture was evidently being extended all around. For the first time in Asiatic Turkey I here came upon fields cut off from each other by regular fences and walls. There was something quite European in the aspect of the country. Near the town the road became broad and was well macadamized, but no wheeled vehicles were anywhere in use. All burdens were still carried on horses, or mules, or donkeys.

Suarick, in ancient days known as Seleucia, is a town of some size, and two of its mosques have pretty minarets. Near the centre of the town is a great artificial mound over a hundred feet high, on which a castle or citadel formerly stood. The foundations of the old fortifications are visible where the rain has washed away part of the earthwork. The whole of the mound was at one time cased with blocks of basalt, but nearly the whole of the revetment has disappeared, no doubt to furnish materials for modern structures. Turkomans form a part of the population of Suarick; Kurds, Armenian Christians, and Jews the remainder. The inhabitants number in all about seven thousand.

The munzil khana was beyond comparison the most abominally filthy and evil-smelling of any I had yet entered. It was quite unendurable, and I went out into the bazaar to walk about while something was being got ready for luncheon. I wished to go into a coffee-shop, but the place was full to overflowing, and the Kurds and Turkomans in occupation had no notion of making room for me. They simply scowled and sat still, so I had to seek hospitality in a barber's shop, where I was much more civilly treated. After a delay of three hours, only one horse could be procured to replace the most tired of those which had come all the way from Diarbekir. We at length started, no zaptiehs being forthcoming. A little way on the road, the tired horse of the Turk from Schipka fell dead lame, and could scarcely move. He had been newly shod at Suarick, and a shoe hurt him; but no one knew the cause of the breakdown at the time.

The surajee refused to take any trouble in the matter, though the horse had come from the munzil khana; he said the animal went all right, and it was not necessary to gallop! The Turk did not say a word to this, but with great deliberation dismounted, and laying hold of the surajee's bridle, ordered him to get down and change horses. The surajee, an active young Kurd, refused, and hit the Turk over the head with his whip. In an instant he was unhorsed, and on his back on the grass. He got up in a fury and rushed at the Turk. Then there was a regular battle royal; the Turk, quite cool and taciturn, struck out at the Kurd, who was all fire and fury, and accompanied every blow and kick with strange oaths. The Kurd got the worst of it, and a tremendous kick in the ribs from the more brawny Turk ended the combat. The victor got on the surajee's horse, and the surajee, taking the lame one, went back to the town, vowing vengeance.

We then continued our journey, but could not get over much ground, as the horses were far from fresh. An hour later on the surajee overtook us at a gallop, the nail which hurt the horse's hoof having been extracted. He said he would have it out with the Turk, and proceeded to renew the engagement, but the dragoman and I intervened actively on this occasion, and put a stop to the war: we had observed an attitude of benevolent neutrality up to that time, for the Turk was certainly in the right, and he made good his moral claim to the surajee's horse without fuss, and with great pluck and quiet determination. Both men had pistols in their

belts, but neither seemed to have the slightest idea of using them. It was a fair stand-up fight, fists and feet being the only weapons.

That evening we found ourselves at a large village in which some pious hadji had built a little mosque, with a room or two attached for the accommodation of travellers. The owner and some thirty or forty of his co-religionists were at their prayers when we arrived, and we stood discreetly apart so as not to disturb them. Prayers over, we told who we were, and the hadji, in a very kindly way came forward, and taking me under the arm, led me to a mattress in one of the rooms, and told me I was to make myself quite at home for the night. All the Mussulmans present saluted me very cordially, and seemed anxious to make me feel that I was amongst friends. I remembered the doctrine of the worthy Sheikh at Mosul, that religion ordered that travellers should be taken care of, for they were away from their own country and friends. I can only say, that if there be any bigotry amongst these people, I saw no manifestation of it throughout my long journey; I could not have been received with greater courtesy if I had been myself a true believer.

Early on the 13th of May I started for Orfah—the Ur of the Chaldees, whence Abraham and Lot set forth for other lands. The route lay over undulating ground, broken and very rocky. The people are for the most part Turkomans, and they appeared to have large flocks of sheep in their care. Little of the land is under the plough, doubtless on account of its rocky nature, but

there is abundance of rich grass. While still some miles from the city we came upon some curious caves cut in the solid rock; many of them were filled with water, the entrances being flush with the ground, so that rain would at once drain into them. But in places the inequalities of the ground had been turned to account to give access to the rock-cut chambers through regular doorways. I went into one of the caves and found that there were recesses cut into the sides, no doubt for the reception of the bodies of the dead. There is little doubt that these caves were in most instances used as mortuary chambers, though tradition asserts that some of them were used by the patient Job before his misfortunes, to store grain. The very house in which Job lived is still shown not very far to the north of Orfah, and Mussulman and Jew are equally satisfied that it was Job's house and no other. Indeed, the identical cave in which he sat, when, sorely afflicted and covered with ulcers, he had to endure the visits of his comforters, is also to be seen.

The city of Orfah affords a fine view to the traveller coming from the East, it being built of white limestone, on the gentle slope of a hill of considerable height and great length. It is the best built of all the cities yet seen, and its population is estimated at fifty thousand. Several mosques, with graceful minarets of white stone, add to the picturesqueness of the first view. The walls and fortifications are in fair condition, but are out of date. The country through which the city is approached is well cultivated, and vineyards are very numerous. The vines are cut short as gooseberry bushes; they are

not trailed from tree to tree as in Italy. The streets of Orfah are paved and are of reasonable width. Cleanliness is apparently better appreciated than in Diarbekir and the other large cities; doubtless, the fact that the city is built on a declivity facilitates drainage. My experience of the munzil khanas of the more important towns I had hitherto visited having been so very unfortunate, that I would not go to that at Orfah, but went to the Turkish telegraph office, and seeing there a young Turkish official, asked if I might stop at the office for an hour or two. He at once made me welcome, and invited me to luncheon, an invitation which, of course, I accepted. As we could not get on very well in conversation, he sent round to the French Consul, to tell him that a Frank had arrived, and would no doubt be glad to have a chat with him.

The Consul came round, without standing on ceremony, and we had a very agreeable hour together. He told me that when he first came to Orfah twenty-one years ago the country was so unsafe, that he and others waited at Birijik till sixty men on horseback, all armed, were collected, so that they might be able to defend themselves with something like a chance of success against the predatory Arabs. Now, in spite of what was said about the insecurity of the routes, a single zaptieh was quite protection enough for any one going from the one place to the other. Any one, he said, who recollected the state of things twenty or thirty years since saw what a wonderful change for the better had been effected.

I may be pardoned if I here mention, as in a parenthesis, that a few days after my arrival in England I was favoured with a letter from a gentleman in Scotland, who mentioned incidentally, that when he visited Baghdad forty years ago, he was detained there for two months, in consequence of the city being besieged by the Arabs! Denuded of troops as the country has been during the late war, not even the most timid apprehended anything of the kind happening. The authority of the Sultan has been very systematically brought home to the nomades during the last fifteen or twenty years, and though much still remains to be done to complete the work, it is certain that great progress has been made in teaching them habits of subordination and respect for the state.

In the afternoon a Turkish gentleman, a refugee from Roumelia, came in and joined in the conversation. He was dressed in the latest European fashion, and his appearance and manners were those of a well-bred Englishman. I was told that he was a man of very good family and of large property, which was lost through the disasters of the war.

The consul very obligingly became my guide to some of the sights of Orfah, and showed me its principal streets and buildings. He then took me to his house, introduced me to his wife, and showed me an Orfah interior. The house was very well built, and in the garden attached honeysuckles and other European summer flowers were in full bloom. I was next taken to see the spot where, according to local tradition, the tyrant Nimrod tried to consume Abraham in a fiery

furnace, but was singularly discomfited by divine interposition. Nimrod, according to the popular belief, made a furnace so hot that it was found impossible for his minions to approach near enough to it to throw in Abraham and his brother Haran. He therefore bethought himself of turning to account a cliff, nearly two hundred feet high, which overhung the spot on which the fiery furnace had been prepared. He erected two pillars, still standing, on the cliff, and between them suspended a chain—I am told it is still in the town—which was to be used to project the victims of his unrighteous anger into the fire below. Abraham and his brother were flung by this singular machine right down into the furnace, and Haran, it would appear, was consumed to ashes. But when Abraham fell, a great fountain burst forth—or rather two fountains—at the indentations made by his knees, and the water extinguished the furnace. The tyrant's soldiers were instantly converted into fish so numerous that the water of the fountains could hardly contain them; and the posterity of these fish are there to this day.

I cannot, of course, be expected to pronounce an opinion as to the exact truth of this legend, but I may state that the fish in the two large reservoirs of sparkling water, underneath the lofty cliff, are so numerous that it would be impossible to thrust a stick suddenly in without spearing one or more of them. There is a mosque close by, and the faithful who come to pray, bring food for the fish, so that numerous as they are they need never fear famine; they come to be fed at the

voice of the donors. The two springs which supply the reservoirs continuously send forth an immense quantity of water; what runs off turns several mills at a little distance. Each reservoir is about two hundred feet long by about half that width, and the depth is four feet. It would not be worth any one's while to poach in those carefully preserved fish-ponds; the death of the impious angler would be a matter of course. From the time of Abraham it is said that not one of those fish has been caught by the hook of man.

As for the two pillars I can only say that I saw them. The chain I did not see, but I was told that it exists for all that. The pillars seemed to me to have plinths and capitals, closely resembling what a Roman, with his head turned by the contemplation of Greek models, might have put up; but I had not time to examine them particularly. A pair of haji glou-glous had built an enormous nest on the top of one of them. If the wind does not blow it away the young cranes will have a fine view over the city when they are hatched.

Just outside the enclosure within which are the reservoirs, is the house in which Abraham was born. It is a large chamber hewn out of the rock; and no one but a Mussulman is allowed to visit it; at least so I was told, but I have no doubt a little backsheesh would gain admittance for any one who had time to negotiate the matter. The cradle in which Ibrahim-Ullah—God's Abraham—was laid when he was born is still in the house; it is carved out of a large white stone. When little Moslems of tender age fall sick, an infallible

cure is looked for, if they be not fated to die—For who knows? Life and death are in the hands of Allah!—when they are placed in this stone cradle, and left there for a night. If they are indeed destined to die—Allah be merciful to them!—they are in Paradise before the morning, but if they are to live, the night in the sacred cradle will have made their recovery certain. I looked longingly in at the partially opened door, to get a view of this wonderful relic of the great patriarch, and I did actually see its white form for an instant, but nothing distinctly, for the door was shut to before I could quite make it out in the shade.

I had not time to visit the spring near at hand, at which, according to the pious citizens of Orfah, Rebecca, whom they call Rafeka, drew water for the servant of Abraham, when he was sent to Urr to find a wife for Isaac.

At six in the evening I left Orfah, and found the road very rough and trending away among hills. The zaptiehs said they knew "black tents," where we could rest for the night, and after four hours' difficult marching we arrived at a very large encampment of Kurds. Some two or three thousand sheep were kept in a sort of enclosure made of the tents, and twenty camels, and more than that number of horses, formed part of the stock of these wealthy villagers. As usual, I was given a spot under the raised end of a tent on which to sleep, but I was not invited to enter the tent. It was raining a little, and the tent of goat's hair was quite saturated, so that I did not lose much by sleeping in what might be

poetically described as the verandah. The thick felt quilts which are in general use in these encampments keep the rain off the sleeper very effectually.

At five o'clock in the morning of the 14th May I pushed on once more. In two hours we passed through Charmulk, once evidently a place of some importance, but now in decay. It has a very large caravanserai, and an old mosque of considerable pretensions, but the caravanserai is closed and the mosque is falling to ruin. The country hereabouts is undulating and well cultivated, but not so fertile, so far as the eye could tell, as the land further to the east. The houses in the villages we pass are not badly built; and the people seem to be fairly comfortable and well-to-do. They are amply clothed, and are obviously well fed. They are quite as robust as any I have yet seen, and that is saying a good deal. We soon get into a broken hilly country, and in a little time we come suddenly down to a lower level, and find a complete change of climate. Instead of being cool and spring-like the weather becomes in a few minutes quite hot and, indeed, tropical. We have come down into the valley of the Euphrates, the river being some six or eight miles distant. The soil is in great part, little else than chalk, and the roadway or track where the surface is constantly disturbed, glistens in the sun, and blinds one like Arctic snow. I had to stop and put on my smoked glasses, which I had laid aside after entering the hills two days' journey to the north of Baghdad. As we go along a zaptieh points to a little village on the left, and says that its inhabitants are very bad

people; they come out at night and rob travellers coming from Birijik. He could give no reason why the authorities did not make these bad people amenable to the law.

When we get on a rising ground we see the Euphrates like a broad ribbon of water winding among a succession of low hills. Birijik itself is conspicuous on its hither bank, for it is in great part built on a hill of chalk, and its every house, its mosques and minarets, and its curious fortifications, are all built of stone which can scarcely be distinguished from chalk, and some of which can be cut with a penknife like cheese.

Though the greater part of the town is on a hill, yet when we approach we have to go down a road so steep that in parts steps of stairs have been cut in it, for my destination is the telegraph office, and that happens to be on the very edge of the water, in the lowest part of the town. On either hand in this difficult descent I have pomegranate-trees in full bloom, and many fragrant orange-trees. The fig-tree and the vine are also on the steep slopes of the gardens, and every inch of available space seems to be turned to account. The population of Birijik is about twelve thousand. The Euphrates flows past it as broad and as impetuous as I had seen it a month before at Babylon; but it is not so deep, as we shall find when we cross it in a barge presently.

The telegraph superintendent was very obliging, and interested himself in procuring, or rather trying to procure, a change of horses, and a couple of zaptiehs, so that I might cross the river, and continue my march by

daylight. The zaptiehs were promised and duly sent, but there was a great delay about the horses. When they came, late in the evening, I saw that one of them was an old acquaintance; it had already come all the way from Orfah, and was, of course, quite tired. A message to the Governor set this right, after a most angry scene with the Armenian post contractor, a young man very well dressed, very good-looking, very clever, and a thorough-paced rogue. He stoutly maintained that there was no other horse but the tired one, though there were three very good animals in the stable before my eyes. When he found that I appealed to the Pasha direct, and vowed that I would make him suffer for his disregard of my firman, he quite coolly ordered out a fresh horse, just as if he had not taken an affidavit that the three I had been looking at were not his, and that he could not touch them to oblige his brother.

The horses secured, we went to a sort of wharf, where the barges for crossing the river were moored. The place was encumbered with sacks of grain, and it was difficult to get near the river. When we arrived at the water's edge, the man in charge of the barges said that it was eight o'clock, and the river could not be crossed that night; there were no men to work a barge across, The only possible resource under the circumstances was to offer to pay a princely sum in backsheesh; and, after some demur, the man sent a lad to the coffee-shops to call eight men to transport my party—five in all—to the Syrian bank. I thought the number preposterous but as things turned out there was not a man too many.

The horses were with some difficulty forced to jump into the large flat-bottomed barge, and while the embarkation was in progress, I noticed that one of the zaptieh's horses had a bad fetlock. I pointed this out, and expressed an opinion that the horse could not travel any great distance with comfort. "Oh!" said the zaptieh, "it does not make any difference; when we get across the Fraat the Beg will see how the horse will go!" And so I did.

When the horses were all in, a chain was made fast across the boat, so as to keep them huddled up together so close that they had no room to kick, or fight, or struggle. Stout beams, twenty feet long and fully five inches in diameter, with ridiculously small pieces of board, resembling dinner-plates in size and shape, tied on to their ends, by way of paddles, were then got out, and four men assigned to each. The barge was cast off, and in an instant we were rushing down the Euphrates as if we were in a desperate hurry to get to Babylon, and had not a moment to lose. The lights of Birijik flitted past us, and were soon left a good way behind. By the time the eight rowers had got the barge into the middle of the stream, we had been carried by the current right away from the town. The river just at this spot seemed to be about a mile and a half broad, but, no doubt, what appeared to be its middle was really the western bank, the flood having covered very superficially a quantity of low-lying land beyond it.

While we were going along with the swift current in the apparent middle of the stream we suddenly grounded,

the bottom of the barge grating harshly over a bed of gravel. The shock nearly threw the horses off their feet; they must have fallen had they not been supported by the chain and by one another. The eight bargemen pulled in their oars, and, leaping into the water up to their waists, proceeded to shove the stranded vessel into somewhat deeper water. By great exertion they succeeded, and then partly floated, partly shoved, her near the shore. This operation took half an hour at least; and while it was going on I had full leisure to enjoy a very pretty scene, the fording of the Euphrates by a line of camels numbering some hundreds. While getting through the deeper part of the river little more than their humps and necks could be seen above the surface of the water, but when they got half way across, they, like the barge, came upon the shallows, and were little more than ankle-deep in the stream. Consequently, the whole file of camels looked as if they were walking on the water, the river being apparently no deeper where they were leisurely wending their way than in the part close to the Mesopotamian bank.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM THE EUPHRATES TO ALEPPO.

On Syrian soil—The faithless zaptieh—An inhospitable village—The stolen provender and the zaptieh's horse—Increasing traffic—Again in the Arab country—Effect on the dragoman's nerves—Trouble with the surajee and the zaptieh—Chawan Beggi—Kurdish tents—The herdsman and the zaptieh—Broken rest—On to Aleppo—The repentant surajee—Appearance of the city—The Hotel Cleophas—Unexpected news—Leave Aleppo for the coast.

At length we reached Syrian soil, not indeed in the barge, but on the shoulders of the stalwart bargees. The horses had to jump into the water, and finish the passage by wading knee-deep to dry land. All being mounted we set out, and a hundred yards inland a small village came in view on the left. To this the zaptieh with the horse which he promised would go all right, once the river was passed, at once made off. I thought he had missed his way, but his companion said that he would come no further;—he was not wanted, "For," said he, "I am myself a match for six bad people, and the Beg need have no fear while I am with him." Not to show myself behind this worthy in self-confidence I told him that I, too, was fully a match single-handed

for six bad people, seeing that I had six lives in my revolver.

There was dead silence for a mile, and then seeing the track pretty straight, I proposed to push on a little. The valiant zaptieh said he was afraid of hurting his

A KURD OF NORTHERN SYRIA.[1]

horse; there might be holes in the ground, which could not be seen in the dark, and it was best to walk. Walk, then, we did for nearly four mortal hours before we

[1] From a photograph by M. Sebah, of Constantinople.

came, at midnight, to a well-built but by no means well-stocked or very comfortable village. The zaptieh—a Kurd of very powerful build—confided to me that he had bought his horse on credit; he was to pay ten pounds Turkish for it; and as it was not yet quite his own, he was, of course, anxious that it should come to no harm. This man was a sergeant of zaptiehs, and in some respects was a very fine specimen of the Kurds of Northern Syria; where, removed from the demoralizing example of the reivers of the Kurdish Highlands, they are passing honest, and are thrifty and circumspect in the management of their worldly affairs.

When we arrived at the village, no shelter was obtainable, but after a little negotiation, we were shown a dry pavement in front of one of the houses, where we could bivouac till the morning. The village was on a little hill, and the wind swept fierce and chill over the pavement in question; but by putting my rug in a line with the wind, and piling saddle and saddle-bags at my head, I was very tolerably protected from its direct incidence.

That business arranged, I looked round and saw the horses standing by quite uncared for. The rascally Armenian had given the surajee no barley for them, and no money to buy any; therefore, they were to pass the night fasting, and to be turned out to grass in the morning, to get their breakfasts as best they could. At that rate it would be near midday before we should be again fairly on our way. The horses would be quite unable to go on if they were starved for the night, and

then grass-fed as chance determined. So I offered to pay for barley; there was none in the village. I then offered to pay for grass; and after near an hour's delay, several small bundles were got and given to the horses. When I saw this accomplished I fell off to sleep. The moment my eyes were shut, the sergeant of zaptiehs got up, and took the bundles of grass from the three unfortunate post-horses, and gave them all to his own well-fed brute, which would have been the better of a little fasting. A zaptieh's horse never starves. The first field his master comes to furnishes a meal for him, no matter who its owner may be. The theft was the more inexcusable as the sergeant had a little bag of barley, hanging at his saddle-bow, and he well knew that the post-horses got no barley, and had to do their work entirely upon grass. In the morning I was awoke by the loud voices of the surajee and the dragoman denouncing the perfidy of the zaptieh. A glance at the post-horses, which were shrunk and starved looking, and then the sight of the zaptieh's fat horse, swelled almost to bursting by a feed all too large of wet grass, showed plainly enough that the remonstrances addressed to the sergeant were well grounded. He scarcely deigned to defend himself: "The grass he gave his horse," he said, "he had paid for; if the surajee and Yusef neglected the other horses what was that to him?" He said this, so as to put in a formal plea of not guilty; but it was evident he did not expect to be believed, and what was more that he did not care a para whether he was believed or not. His horse was well-fed,

and the others could hardly walk; he was justified by the result.

We started at five o'clock on May 15th, and went on slowly, looking out for a place where we could pasture the horses without quitting the main track. At seven o'clock we came to a little hill, with a rivulet flowing at its foot, and then we halted for an hour to let the poor animals graze in comfort. The road was now much more frequented than we had seen it anywhere eastward of the Euphrates; the traffic was more continuous; the country-people were constantly passing and repassing in little groups, and sometimes in twos or threes. One was never out of sight of wayfarers for quarter of an hour together.

The horses strengthened and refreshed, we go on again, and I insist upon going at something better than a snail's pace. The zaptieh and the surajee both refuse, saying that all travellers walk; no one goes faster than a walk in this country. I canter on leaving them behind, the dragoman keeping with me. We pass a Pasha going eastward, attended by a small escort; he has, like myself, an Indian sun helmet, under an Arab kaftieh, and until I was told who he was, I imagined he was an Anglo-Indian doing my journey, as it were, backwards. Just after passing him, we rode through a good-sized village, and as luck would have it, there was in the market-place an Arab on a fine mare, a capacious brown cloak over his shoulders, and the usual long spear in his hand. It was so long since we had seen a son of the desert thus equipped, that the sight completely up-

set the dragoman's nerves. He declared that it was not safe to go on without the zaptieh and the surajee; no one could tell what might happen. I pointed out to him that caravans were always in sight, and that none of them had zaptiehs; there was nothing to be feared. Ah, said he, but there are Arabs in this country! It was not so very long since he had left the country of the Arabs to enter that of the Kurds in fear and trembling; now he was quite unnerved at finding that the Kurds were to give place to Arabs in the landscape. Finding how the matter stood, I told him to go back to the two laggards, and come on in their company while I went forward. He stopped behind accordingly while I made my way in advance, the country becoming more fertile and better cultivated, and the route more frequented at every mile. Yusef came after me in an hour or so as hard as he could, saying he was ashamed to stop behind while I went on alone. We then went on together, and by noon we had put a good forty miles between us and the river.

We were, of course, now well in advance of the zaptieh and the surajee, quite out of their sight, and if we had been so minded, might have made off with the horses altogether. That view of the case evidently struck the pair, for while we were giving the horses a long interval of rest between the canters by walking them slowly, up they both came at a furious rate, their horses pumped out, and they themselves in a state of fury. The surajee laid hold of the dragoman's bridle, and told him to get down, for he was killing the horse, and he should not ride

another step. I tapped the excited surajee's knuckles gently with the butt end of my whip, so as to remind him of the danger of going to extremities, and made him let go. The surajee had evidently been promised moral support or something more by the zaptieh, and he stood in the way, and would not let the dragoman ride on until I threatened to ride over him, when he suddenly collapsed and ceased from inconveniencing us by anything further than loud words. I found that my threat had been very freely interpreted by the dragoman, who told his antagonist that Franks thought no more of shooting a man than of shooting a dog, and that I would use my revolver if he did not keep quiet.

All this time the sergeant had taken up what he no doubt considered an imposing attitude on the left, and by look and gesture gave courage to the demonstrative surajee. But he did not commit himself by a word or an overt act. I was not going to let him off on that account, however, so I took him to task about having remained behind through "fear" for his horse. I told him that if a soldier in Frangistan refused to carry out any orders he got from his superior, through fear either for himself or his horse, he would most certainly be shot. I inquired particularly what punishment was inflicted by the Osmanlis upon zaptiehs who behaved like the one who stopped behind altogether the previous evening, or like himself lagged behind for several hours that morning? The embarrassment with which he tried to evade answering my questions on this head was most amusing. About the other zaptieh, he professed to

know nothing; perhaps he had some message to deliver at the village and had missed us in the dark when trying to follow; as for himself, he had come on all right, for there he was now at my side; he would go as fast as I liked; if it killed his horse what did it matter? He did not care so long as the Beg was satisfied. And so he tendered his submission and made his peace.

Soon after, we arrived at the post station of Chawan Beggi, a village of some size. The munzil khana was kept by an Arab, and it was most surprisingly clean and comfortable. A large room off the stable was white-washed and set apart for travellers. I rested there until five o'clock, when it was necessary to start afresh. A village of black tents some twenty miles further on had to be reached before, tired though I was, I could hold that I had earned a night's repose. We pushed on to the black tents, the sergeant of zaptiehs now keeping up bravely. We arrived between nine and ten o'clock, and it turned out that the head-man of the village was the father of the sergeant. The meeting between the two was very characteristic of the simple manners of these people. The old grey-headed man came out to meet his son the moment a little boy ran in and told him he had arrived; they said a few words together in a low tone, and then the brawny serjeant was turning away to put up the horse of which he was so careful, when his father laid hold of the bridle with one hand to keep him from moving, and then pulled his son down to him till he could kiss his cheek. There was so little "effusion" or parade in this, and so much evidence of quiet,

but very deep natural affection, that I was much struck by it. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. This big sergeant of zaptiehs who stole the grass from other people's horses to feed his own, and whom I had regarded as a man that might perchance be usefully shot as an example to zaptiehs in general, was, after all, a man of flesh and blood, around whom centred home affections sincere and deep.

The encampment was a very extensive one, sheep, goats, horses, colts, and donkeys being mixed up confusedly with the tents and their owners. I slept in a tent open at the sides, and the ventilation left nothing to be desired. A colt first, and then half-a-dozen goats walked over me and broke my rest, but happily not my bones. The hard hoofs of the colt and the animals' weight made me start up in some alarm, thinking the Philistines were upon me; my sudden movement frightened the giddy horseling, and it got out of my reach before I could lay my whip about its back.

On the 16th May, at five o'clock in the morning, I had risen from my lowly couch to start for Aleppo, some eighteen miles distant. I flattered myself that I would have a rest of a few days' duration in that favoured city, and as I had not let the grass grow under my feet from the time I left Diarbekir, I felt that I was honestly entitled to the reward of a short halt. I did not then know that I should neither stop nor stay, nor lay myself down to sleep until I had made a forced march of a hundred and ten miles and reached the deck of the French steamer to start from the harbour of Alexandretta with

the mails the following day. Of all that I had not even the remotest suspicion when I set out for Aleppo that bright and joyous morning. The sergeant of zaptiehs, it need scarcely be said, did not accompany us further; he remained behind in the bosom of his family, and no doubt gave his venerable and affectionate parent a fine account of my disregard of the claims of horses to food and a gentle life.

As for the wicked surajee, he was completely and boisterously penitent,—he sang and shrieked in the joy of his wild young soul, as he madly galloped on challenging me to race, so that I might see it was not he but the sergeant of the zaptiehs who was afraid of fast riding. I saw no objection to getting over the ground quickly so as to arrive in Aleppo early, have a Turkish bath and a breakfast, and then see the sights at leisure, so I galloped my surajee to his heart's content, and my horse being the better of the two, I had no difficulty in leaving him behind. That morning's galloping was the most continuous and unrestrained I had yet indulged in, for I counted upon the shortness of the stage and the long rest in the capital of Northern Syria.

As we drew nearer the city the country became hilly, and in parts stony and unfruitful. But wherever there was the usual red soil there were gardens with plantations of fig-trees, olives, and the vine. The city itself is for the most part built on a low hill, surrounded by a plain encircled by hills. In the centre of the city is a great artificial mound, on which stands the citadel. Very substantial walls, some thirty feet high, surround

the whole; and the mosques and convents, and, indeed, all the buildings, being constructed of a yellowish free-stone, Aleppo has more the air of a substantial capital, with a future as well as past, than any of the towns I had yet seen. The population is set down at 90,000, and is composed of representatives of all races of the empire, and a few others.

Files of laden camels were crossing the plain to the city as we approached the walls. Some of the camels were jet black; they appeared to be of a different breed from those hitherto met with. The signs of a great traffic were everywhere apparent, but it seemed unaccountable that even in the immediate vicinity of this busy centre of commerce not a single cart of any kind existed: everything is transported on the backs of animals.

When we enter the town we see that the streets are of considerable width; some are fully twenty-five feet across, and have side pavements for foot-passengers. The houses are substantially built of hewn stone, and are two and even three stories in height. The primitive stalls of the Oriental bazaar are now developing into the European shop, and there is a display of European goods such as the large cities further from the Mediterranean cannot boast. The citizens are more slender and less ruddy in complexion than those of Orfah, Diarbekir, and Mosul; but they have a more alert and lively air, as if they were more accustomed to business than their brethren of those towns. There is a large colony of Levantines in the city, and almost every European

nation, is represented by a consul. There is, consequently, a European or semi-European atmosphere about the place, which modifies the Oriental aspect of the great majority of the population.

At Orfah, I had been recommended to put up on my arrival at Aleppo at an hotel opened by a Madame Cleophas, the widow of a Frenchman who had been for some years in business in the town. The hotel in question is situated near the centre of the town, close to the Convent of the Holy Land, and in making my way thither it so happened that I passed successively through nearly every one of the different quarters into which Aleppo is divided. Each quarter is shut in from its neighbours by lofty gates, which are closed at night for greater security against thieves and other bad characters. No such arrangement, so far as I know, exists in any other Turkish city. The difficulty of entering a new quarter at any point other than that furnished with the regulation gate, makes the task of finding one's way across the city from place to place one of considerable labour and perplexity, especially to an utter stranger. When, at length, I got near the Christian quarter some French-speaking passers-by very civilly showed me the way to the hotel I was in search of; and, while passing along, I noticed that there were three others kept apparently by Germans. There were also several places where sauer-kraut and Vienna beer were on sale.

The Hotel Cleophas is a large building, three stories high, with an interior court bright with flowers and shrubs. I do not suppose that it would be con-

sidered a first-class hotel in Europe; but certainly there is nothing comparable to it eastward. The proprietress is an Aleppine, who strives hard to be French, and she partly succeeds. But the cares of management are shared by another elderly Aleppine of more energy and determination.

I was scarcely installed in this hostelry than I met a Levantine sauntering about the courtyard, with whom I fortunately entered into conversation. He asked me casually, whether I intended to catch the steamer which was to leave Alexandretta on Saturday (it being then Thursday), for, added he, if so, you will not have much time to see Aleppo. The question surprised me, for I was told at Diarbekir that the steamer would leave on the Friday week, and I thought I should have ample leisure to see Aleppo, Antioch, and the adjacent country. I went at once to the nearest Consulate, that of Austro-Hungary, to make inquiries. The consul told me that the French steamer would leave on Saturday, and no other for a fortnight. The country for the last few days having been broken and hilly, and the horses rarely changed, I was a little tired, but of course I had to push on at once, for a fortnight would be too much to spend, even under Madame Cleophas's hospitable roof. The post route to Scandaroon (Alexandretta) is set down as thirty-six hours—over a hundred miles—quite enough for two days without any change of horses on the way. So I send forthwith for horses to start at noon for Alexandretta. The Post Khana sends back word that the post goes at four o'clock, and there are no horses to

spare for me. I send to a private establishment and get three horses (or the promise of them) at the extortionate price of 150 piastres per horse. They come at one o'clock, and one of the "horses" turns out to be a mule. However, I pay the money and get them saddled.

Matters are at this point when the Aleppine who aids the proprietress in managing the hotel, thinks she sees her way to keeping me as a boarder for a few days. She comes up and assures me that I am the victim of a false alarm; that the steamer for Constantinople goes not at the end of the week, but at the beginning, and that she knows, as a matter of fact, that a mail boat for Stamboul will start on the following Tuesday, and that it is the Egyptian boat which goes on Saturday. If I start on Sunday I will therefore be in ample time. It would be a deplorable thing for a gentleman to find himself for several days at Alexandretta, such a place for fever! Everybody leaves it who values his life.

While the good lady was saying this she knew perfectly well that the mail steamer that was to leave Alexandretta on the following Tuesday was the one for Egypt and not the one for Stamboul, but that did not trouble her conscience in the least. Her only object was to keep a customer for a couple of days: whether he thereby lost a couple of weeks or not was nothing to her.

Fortunately I placed more reliance on the information acquired at the Consulate of Austro-Hungary than on that which she volunteered, and soon after one o'clock I set out on the last stage of my land journey.

CHAPTER XIII.

FORCED MARCH TO THE COAST.

The first village—Arrival of the post—More news—Riding through the night—A forty minutes' halt—The Beilan Mountain—The Plain of Antioch—Ancient causeways—Circassian refugees from the Seat of War—Their bivouac—A Turkish traveller—Circassian misdeeds at Aleppo—Turkish refugees—Bridge over grass-land—Camels—Great marsh—Accident to the post—Wearisome tacking across the plain—Turkoman manners—A welcome khan—Crossing the Beilan—Good road—Lake of Antioch—The town of Beilan—First sight of the Mediterranean—Misled by appearances—Second view—Result—Arrival at Alexandretta—The Messageries Maritimes—An unexpected difficulty—Finally surmounted—On board the Scamandre.

We had now to make a long forced march. By starting three hours in advance of the post, I calculated upon getting a little time to rest and bait the horses at a point some twenty-four miles distant, while it overtook us. The surajee rode the mule, which was strong and brisk. The horses were very fair, and were barley fed. We traversed a hilly country to the north-west rather slowly, the ground being covered with big stones that made it impossible to get on faster than a walk. By seven o'clock we got to a village eight hours from Aleppo and waited for the post to come up. While

waiting I had a dinner of the unleavened bread of Syria, and a basin of milk. There was nothing else to be got.

The man in charge of the post came at 10.30 and handed over the horses and bags to other men. The new postman said that the steamer would go the next day, Friday, not on Saturday, and that it would start the moment he got to Scanderoon with the letter bags. This was news indeed. There was nothing for it but to make a forced march and reach Scanderoon before the post, so as to get money for my letters of credit and take my passage. So we all started together at eleven at night and rode on in company till three a.m. next morning. Then we halted for forty minutes to rest the horses and ourselves. We stopped at a khan, a sort of coffee-house, where hot coffee was served out to us as we sat on wooden benches round the walls. The horses were huddled into a long stable out of the damp night air, and there they munched their barley as if conscious that they had no time to lose. We started again at twenty minutes to four, and crossed a river of some breadth and volume, the current being very strong. I put my feet up as high as I could, but I could not succeed in keeping them wholly out of the water. This by no means added to my comfort. The night was bitterly cold, and I felt almost benumbed, though muffled in my Arab cloak. A piercing wind blew off the snow-capped summit of the Beilan Mountain, which we were steadily approaching. The postman said he knew short cuts, and thought he could get to Scanderoon in twenty-eight hours (of distance). He

knew fords through the water which must be crossed or avoided before getting to the Beilan. The post either trotted or went at a brisk five miles an hour walk the whole time. I either walked or cantered, for the short jolting trot was very fatiguing. Two zaptiehs escorted the post.

At daybreak we see the black wall-like mass of the Beilan range, running from north-east to south-west and blocking our way. The great plain ot Antioch is between us and the mountain. To the south of the plain is the Lake of Antioch, a great sheet of water over which pelicans fly in clouds. The whole of the centre of the plain is a vast marsh, a hideous bog of black rottenness, smelling abominably, and in parts hidden by water. A great stone causeway was carried across the plain and marsh by the Romans, and we shall go over traces of it as we cross. Later on another and finer causeway was carried by Sultan Murad—so the surajee tells me—and that will be our route for a couple of miles. Before descending from the hilly country into this plain, the postman says he will change his escort and follow us at once. We go on, but he does not come for an hour and a half.

A few minutes after we have left the post and the zaptiehs, we come upon half-a-dozen Circassians, very well dressed and well armed. They look at us and pass on. We then find that they are but the advanced guard, as it were, of several hundreds of Circassian men, women, and children from Bulgaria, refugees who had lost everything through the war. The Government

provided horses for the transport of the children and of such baggage as the fugitives had been able to bring away with them from their villages in Europe. Wooden boxes with the lids torn off are slung by ropes across some of the horses; a sick mother sits in one box, and two or three children and some pots and pans occupy the other, and maintain an unstable equilibrium. Bedding, a few chairs, cooking utensils, constitute nearly the whole of the remaining property of these poor wretches. Judging from the clothes worn by most, they must quite recently have been comfortable enough and well to do, but they were very evidently reduced to ruin. Some of them had starvation stamped on their pale faces.

One woman was lying in the middle of the roadway, evidently dying of exhaustion, and the effects of the night's exposure. Two splendid-looking fellows, over six feet high, doubtless her husband and brother, stood by, but they could do nothing but wait for the end. Her eyes followed me listlessly as I rode slowly past. I told Yusef to ask what was the matter with the woman, thinking that I might be able to be of some service if once relations were opened with her guardians. But they tartly answered "Nothing!" and we passed on. The surajee said that the men were no doubt afraid to let it be known that any one was sick, for fear the Pasha might put them all in quarantine. We presently came to the place where these unfortunate people had passed the night in the open air, with the piercing wind from the snow-capped Beilan blowing over them. The

tall wet grass was pressed down where they had lain upon it; the ashes of three or four not very large fires showed where their cooking had been got through, apparently before daybreak.

A Turkish gentleman going to Antioch here joined me for a short distance, and he stated that a great number of Circassians had been landed in Syria since their expulsion from Europe. They were brought to Alexandretta in Government steamers, which took back conscripts to strengthen the army before Constantinople. The refugees were distributed throughout the interior, wherever there appeared to be room for them. But they were greatly disliked and feared by the villagers, because they stole whatever they could lay their hands on. At one time they were being planted about Aleppo, but that did not answer at all. They stole a girl of twelve, and the Aleppines could not endure them after. They were afraid that other children might be stolen. When things were in that state a Circassian woman and an Aleppine had a dispute in one of the public baths; the Circassian called to her countrymen who were outside, and they all ran into the women's bath—a shameful act—and began to beat the Aleppine. The neighbourhood rose upon this, but then some sixty or seventy of the Circassians drew their swords and fought the citizens. The Pasha heard of the disturbance, and he sent soldiers; the Circassians were at first going to fight them too, for they do not care what they do, but the soldiers were too strong for them, and six or eight Circassians were put in prison and would shortly be tried

and punished. After that disturbance the Circassians were sent away from the town into the villages.

As we proceeded we came upon little groups of other refugees from the seat of war. These people were not Circassians, but Turks, who had been turned bag and baggage out of Europe; the men wore European clothes, and broad-brimmed hats, not unlike the sombreros of South America. They were of the middle class, and the ladies of their party had yashmaks of tulle, which did not conceal a feature. They were very haggard and weary; being evidently quite unaccustomed to roughing it in the world.

We are now fairly out of the hills, and on the great Plain of Antioch. We pass on the right a long bridge of many arches, running over the grass; there is no sign of a river ever having passed under it, but doubtless some centuries ago it had a reason for its existence. For some miles we go over beautiful green sward, like an English meadow, and we seem to be getting quite near the foot of the Beilan Pass straight in our front. The grass appears to continue the whole way to the mountain, and to clothe its lower slopes. To the right, indeed, water is visible, and the surajee tells us that a great lake—the Lake of Antioch—is some miles to the left; it is not, however, in sight. We see line after line of camels crossing the plain towards us, and we soon meet and begin to pass them. We come upon a part of the great stone causeway already spoken of. It is here in excellent preservation, a work of which any people might be proud. But as the soft grass is more grateful

to the horses' feet we do not yet get upon the causeway. The camels still half-a-mile off, and all beyond are, however, carefully picking their way across the causeway; when they get to a particular spot they turn from it and are drawn up in what might be called a line of battle across the plain, at right angles to it. We soon find that the invisible line separating the dry land from the marsh crosses the causeway at the spot where the camels quit it, and are halted, while their drivers go back to assist in steering the rest through the dangers of the marsh.

These endless files of camels are returning to Aleppo after taking cotton and wool and other raw products to Scanderoon for exportation. There must be upwards of a thousand of them moving across the plain along the stone causeway where it serves, and floundering through the black mud where it has sunk away out of sight. We soon find ourselves in the marsh and get on the causeway. It is in tolerable repair for about two miles, but after that it is a mere wreck, sinking into the black evil-smelling mud.

When the Sultan Murad's causeway gives out we make a detour to the north to "turn" the marsh, an operation which will certainly occupy some hours, and the sun is now getting well up in the heavens. We get through a number of wide pools of stagnant water by fording. We are crossing one with the water up to the saddle flaps when we hear a loud derisive shout behind us. The postman and his party have come up, and are moving straight across to the foot of the pass, and their

horses are only knee-deep in the water. They will save a good three hours of route by their knowledge of this ford. We have already saved several miles by giving Antioch, which lies on the south, a wide berth, but this stroke of genius will give the post (the whole party basely stopped behind to rest and breakfast under the excuse of changing the escort), another long rest at the foot of the pass, and will besides enable the mail to be delivered on board the steamer, and the steamer to start before I can get on to Scanderoon.

I thought of going back, and crossing the marsh by the short cut, of which the postman had indeed told me during the night. Suddenly down went one of the post party, horse and rider rolling together into deep water. They had scarcely extricated themselves when, in another instant, there was a second immersion. The man swam out, and the horse tried to do the same, but his legs went into the mud, and he sank out of sight. They contrived to get a hold of his bridle and with great difficulty fished him up. I need not say that I did not return on my steps to cross the marsh by the short cut. We sent back the derisive shout so lightly launched at us, and had soon the satisfaction of seeing the undrowned portion of the post party coming after us to make the detour. The rest stopped behind to dry their clothes in the sun.

We were three hours meandering through the paths of that insufferable marsh. It was impossible to go for more than a hundred yards straight on in any direction. We had to turn and turn, until between the sun and the

stench, and the fatigue of the night and the want of breakfast, I felt that even if I were a saint I might swear. But swearing would have been of no use, we had to go steadily backwards and forwards as through a maze, seldom moving in the direction where our goal lay.

To the north, where the morass yielded a little to terra firma, some buffaloes were grazing, and we saw a few miserable villages at a little distance. We came upon a river, which we passed by a bridge. On one of its piers grew a beautiful rhododendron, one mass of blossom. We now approached the base of the mountain, and skirted it for two or three miles, until we once more came in sight of the entrance to the famous pass. Two or three Turkoman lads, with fever written in their glassy eyes, were minding a small flock of sheep, and I asked one of them for a little milk. The boor did not answer a word, but caught a ewe, milked it, and handed me the proceeds, with his stupid, scowling countenance half impudently averted. A more ungracious way of doing a kindly and disinterested action —for he would not take payment—could not be imagined. An Arab lad of his class would have been all smiles and civility, and when I was going away would have asked for backsheesh in addition to whatever payment I might have made him.

At the foot of the pass is a khan, or inn, of a very unpretentious kind, where we arrived at eleven o'clock. I asked for something to eat, for I had not yet breakfasted. The man of the house said there was coffee, but

nothing else. What, nothing? Not even a fowl? No, there was nothing; a number of Circassians had come through yesterday, and when it was known that they were on the way of course everybody sent away fowls and things that might be stolen. After much insisting I got the proprietor of the khan to send to a hamlet at some distance for a little bread and a couple of eggs. Upon that meagre fare I breakfasted, and then at noon we all started for the ascent of the Beilan.

The road over the Beilan is a very tolerable one on the whole; for short stretches it is indifferent, but in parts it is excellent—as good a road as could be made. Upon leaving the khan we go up a gentle slope to the southward, and pass a large rivulet of clear water, which is partly embanked and turned to account for irrigational purposes. We then turn sharply round and proceed up a gentle gradient leading due north, and so backwards and forwards until we are a considerable height above the plain; then the Lake of Antioch comes into full view on the south, and the great plain itself is seen in all its extent, bounded on three sides by mountains and on the fourth side by the lake, which separates it from the range of mountains to the south. It is said that the lake is of comparatively modern origin; no mention of it occurs in history until the ninth century.

The lower slopes of the Beilan are very beautiful. It is like riding through a shrubbery on an immense scale, thousands of rhododendrons in full bloom being the most conspicuous of the flowering shrubs around. A little higher up there is a large park-like expanse, with

fine trees giving a grateful shade every few yards. Camels and mules and pack-horses were grazing as I passed, their drivers resting under the spreading branches of the trees. It is a long but not difficult ascent to the summit of the pass, which is about two thousand two hundred feet above the level of the sea. When there the character of the vegetation changes; dwarfed fir-trees are numerous, and furze-bushes, covered with yellow flowers, are to be seen in every direction. We arrived in the town of Beilan at three o'clock and went into a large coffee-house, to get something in the way of refreshment.

The town of Beilan is most picturesquely situated, overlooking a deep gorge in the mountain on the one hand, and on the other itself overhung by a precipitous cliff of great height. It is about sixteen hundred feet above the sea level, and is, therefore, some hundreds of feet below the higher points of the pass. The deep gorge is traversed half-way below by Roman aqueducts, and the remains of strong fortifications are also to be seen across the narrower part of the gorge. But the road by which the pass is now traversed goes through the town, and is very steep immediately above and below the great shelf of rock on which greater part of the town is built. The houses are of different sizes, some being spacious and of some pretensions to elegance; for Beilan is a great sanitarium, and all the well-to-do inhabitants of Alexandretta come up to reside here in the summer months, so as to escape the malaria which makes the port so unhealthy. A few of the houses had

pointed roofs—something new to my eyes, for in all the towns I had hitherto seen, the roofs were invariably flat.

We stopped twenty-five minutes in Beilan, and some meat was bought at a kind of restaurant ready cooked, and this was very welcome after the long march. To that succeeded the usual Turkish coffee, and we resume our journey. The descent was more tedious than the ascent, for the gradients on the west are in parts much steeper than those on the eastern slope of the mountain. For a time the roadway was almost blocked by several score of mules principally laden with square deal boxes labelled "Gas-light oil."

We soon get again amongst green hills covered with shrubs, intermingled with pines and other trees, indicative of a somewhat cold climate. Rounding the shoulder of a lofty ridge I come in sight of the Mediterranean, looking grey and cold in the distance; mists hang over it to the northward along the shores of Asia Minor, the contour of which was quite visible. The great Bay of Scanderoon is so large that it appears to be simply part of the sea, and not in any very distinct manner cut off or parted from it. Scanderoon does not come at once into view, some projecting hills hiding it as it lies away to the right hand; but the vessels lying off the shore are plain enough. I see two large steamers—one a little to the north amongst the ships, and evidently lying immediately off the town; another a mile to the south has her steam up, and her head in the direction of Egypt. The smoke is floating

northward; it is, I think, evident that this vessel is going to Egypt, as the good lady at the hotel told me; and that the other steamer, which has not its steam up, is most probably the one to go in a few days to Stamboul. In any case the vessel steaming to the south was gone; and the other could not get away that afternoon, for she was making no preparations to start.

I wished sincerely I had listened to the voice of the elderly syren, and had postponed my departure for the coast. But as it was impossible to untravel the road I had come under such difficulties, I thought I might safely do the next best thing—take the remainder of the journey at my ease. I had left the post people, the surajee and the dragoman very far behind, for I wanted to get to Scanderoon, if possible, an hour before the mails were delivered, so as to have time to replenish my stock of money, and make sure of my passage. But now that necessity no longer existed, so far as I could see, and I slackened my pace. I got down and walked so as to ease the unfortunate horse, which was almost on his last legs, and I began the descent to the plain in the most leisurely fashion. I was going along, for over half an hour, very quietly, leading my horse so as to make the way down hill easy to him, when I came to a point where I had a splendid view of the plain between the mountains and the sea, with every road and field and stretch of marsh marked out as on a map, and the town of Alexandretta fifteen miles off, with its white houses and its large custom-house, and, beyond, the shipping in the harbour.

This was a very beautiful sight, for the sun played over all, and made the sea silver and the land golden. While I was scanning the different objects in the varied landscape, I saw the large steamer to the south of the town, and it struck me that she was in the spot where I had first observed her. I looked more intently, and saw that she was at anchor, and that it was the southerly wind that sent her smoke northwards. It was now clear enough that this was, after all, the steamer which was waiting for the mails for Constantinople, and that the moment they were delivered on board, she would weigh anchor and steam off.

The result of this second observation of the steamer was as unfortunate for the horse which I was tenderly leading as the first had been comforting for him. There was not an instant to be lost if I was not prepared to stay a fortnight among the swamps of Alexandretta; so I remounted, and the road becoming more level I put the horse to his best remaining pace. When the road became steep again, I got down and led him, and by thus alternately urging and resting him, got over a good deal of ground and left all the rest of the party far behind. Once down in the plain, I went at a gallop, the spurs making the poor animal forget his fatigue. I was soon among the marshes which are between the higher ground inland and the banks of sand thrown up along the margin of the sea by the action of the wind. A long causeway very well constructed goes through their midst to the town. I hurried along this apparently interminable causeway, and a little after six o'clock

reached the town. The streets were of fair width, and tolerably paved, and even at that hour there was some sign of bustle and business.

It was necessary to get at once to the office of the Messageries Maritimes, and I asked the first inhabitant of decent appearance whom I met where it was situated. As luck would have it, he knew French, and he told me it was at the other side of the town, facing the port. Thither I rattled on, and in a few minutes was on the strand, and the horse had still energy enough to shy at the little white breakers that broke upon the shore.

When I presented myself at the office and asked for a passage, I was told that I could have one; but when I tendered in payment a couple of circular notes, I was told that to receive such articles in lieu of specie was "formellement defendu." I saw M. Ricard, the French Vice-Consul, and the agent of the Messageries Company, but he declared that the orders were positive to remit to Marseilles all passage-money in specie and not in paper of any description. I inquired whether there was any banker or merchant accustomed to the ways of civilization who would give cash for circular notes, and honour a letter of credit. No; besides it was then late; the merchants had left their counting-houses, and it would be difficult to find out where they were at the moment.

Things looked quite desperate. I expostulated with energy, and explained that it was out of the question to bring gold in sackfuls through the desert all the way from Baghdad, and that it was only reasonable that a civilized company like the Messageries should show a

greater acquaintance with commercial usages than an Arab sheikh, and not insist upon having actual coin, or refuse to look at a circular note or a letter of credit.

It was all no use. I then bethought me of an expedient; I pulled out the gold I had for the payment of the dragoman, and considered whether it would not be possible to pay him in part with a circular note and to pay my passage to Constantinople with the difference. But M. Ricard pointed out that the plan was impracticable, for the notes were payable to bearer only—a fact which he very fairly urged rendered them equally useless to the company.

But it also appeared that my letter of credit gave me a claim on the Ottoman Bank, which had a branch at Smyrna. A brilliant idea struck M. Ricard. Why not take my passage to Smyrna in the first instance, get what money I required there, and then go on to Constantinople in peace? After paying the dragoman, I should have just sufficient to carry me to Smyrna, though not enough to carry me to the capital. This suggestion extricated me from what at one moment seemed a most embarrassing situation. I narrate the circumstance to show how the want of ordinary banking facilities in Asiatic Turkey inconveniences travellers. No doubt the difficulty in the way of conducting ordinary trading operations arising from the same cause must be often considerable.

The main difficulty solved, I was able to look about me and to dine. The post and the dragoman arrived

just two hours after I had ridden up to the office of the Messageries Maritimes. As soon as the mail was delivered I went on board the Scamandre with M. Ricard, who very kindly interested himself in securing for me comfortable quarters on board, so that I might make up in sound sleep for the previous night's wakefulness.

My forced march from a point some twenty miles east of Aleppo to the Mediterranean would not have lasted so long—from daybreak on one day to sun-down the next, with only four short halts—if there had been proper relays of horses; but the whole ninety-two miles from Aleppo had to be accomplished with one horse, which—though luckily one of considerable endurance—was, of course, fatigued before half the distance had been traversed. It is an axiom that a tired horse tires the rider. It is hard to understand why the difficulty of procuring relays along the post route increases steadily the farther the traveller gets from Baghdad and the nearer he gets to the capital; but so it is; and in Baghdad everybody says that further east still, and in Persia, the post is supplied with better horses, and with a greater number of them, than at any of the stations in Turkey.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE RAILWAY QUESTION.

Bad roads furnish a reason for railways—Example of America—Possibility of a railway from the Mediterranean to the Gulf—Alexandretta as a point of departure—Fine harbour—Seleucia—Mouth of the Orontes—Unhealthiness of Alexandretta—Remedy—The Beilan pass—The Plain of Antioch—Line to Aleppo—Proposed route down the Euphrates to Bussorah—Objections—Tigris Valley route preferable—Possible junction with the Indian railway system—Would the line pay?—Large traffic to be counted on—Political and strategic advantages—Means of financing the undertaking—The American system—Inducements to capitalists.

A MAN of a sanguine turn of mind, with a taste for paradoxes, might maintain that there is a good omen in the very fact that the post-horses in Turkey were inferior to those of Persia both in numbers and quality; he would rejoice to hear that roads are, for the most part, non-existent, and that where they have been made they are, as a rule, so bad that the traveller takes care to avoid them; for when things are very bad, they mend. In the East, especially, people are prone to let well enough alone, and the need for improvement must become so manifest as to be indisputable before they think it necessary to stir themselves to bring about a better state of things. What gave the great impetus to the

construction of railways in America? "Railways were important in the United States," says a great authority on such matters,[1] "because their highways for traffic were exceedingly inferior. Many of their highways were mere sloughs; the best roads were exceedingly rough and very ill-adapted for rapid locomotion." Having few roads, and the best of those very indifferent, the Americans were driven to cover the land with railways, and they have now a greater length of rails laid down than any people in the world. England having a magnificent system of high-roads, did not at first feel the want of railways, and their introduction was regarded as a nuisance. Some towns exerted themselves to force the railways to take routes at a distance from them, and some time elapsed before they saw the blunder they had committed.

But it is in a country where there is not even a cart with two wheels to be seen in a journey of some fifteen hundred miles that a railway would be appreciated at its full value; and when that country is teeming with natural wealth which only awaits the means of transport to enrich Government and people, it is not likely that a railway once made will lack goods and passengers. Let us see (1) whether a railway could be made in the country we have just traversed; (2) whether, if practicable, it would be likely to pay; (3) what are the obstacles in the way of its being made; and (4) whether

[1] "Resources and Prospects of America," by Sir S. M. Peto, 1866, page 269.

there are any practical means of speedily surmounting those obstacles.

Upon the first point there is such an overwhelming amount of evidence that the answer can be given at once in the affirmative. A railway can be carried from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf along any one of several routes, each with special advantages and disadvantages, but all quite practicable. The engineering difficulties are few, and none of them are equal in magnitude to those which have been surmounted in the construction of lines of railway in India.

The best point of departure on the Mediterranean side is a matter of controversy; but, in my opinion, the choice must ultimately fall upon Alexandretta. The splendid harbour gives that place a decided superiority over its competitors, which are not, indeed, very numerous. It is true that on the west and south-west of the great indentation of the land at the angle formed by the coast of Asia Minor running nearly due west, and that of Syria tending to the south, which forms the Bay of Scanderoon, there is nothing to protect vessels from storms that might come from either direction. I remarked that after my arrival in England to a distinguished naval authority, who knew the whole coast by personal observation extending over many years, and he said that, in spite of that apparent drawback, "The harbour was perfectly safe, for a storm never blew home" at Alexandretta. The configuration of the great mountains to the east and north appeared to exert some influence on the direction of the wind, and vessels in the

harbour were always quite secure when at anchor, whatever storms were prevailing outside. No other harbour exists on the Syrian coast; at Berout, Jaffa, Latakia, &c., there are only open roadsteads.

Near the mouth of the Orontes, indeed, there is, or rather there was, a harbour, that of the once considerable sea-port of Seleucia. It is now quite filled up, the sand being on a level with the mole, which yet remains. The possibility of clearing it out is not denied, and the operation, it is said, would only cost about 30,000*l.*; but as it is only some two thousand feet long by twelve hundred wide, it would be quite inadequate to the requirements of modern trade. The mouth of the Orontes itself might, in the opinion of some, be converted into a spacious harbour, but the cost would be great.

The advantage which either Seleucia or the mouth of the Orontes would offer as the starting-point of a railway into the interior would be twofold. The marsh-fever of Alexandretta would be escaped, and the Beilan pass turned. A railway could be made along the side of the Orontes valley, at a little distance from the banks of the river, according to Mr. W. F. Ainsworth, without encountering any serious engineering difficulties whatever; and if that be really so, the saving of expense would be considerable.

But Alexandretta has a harbour ready for instant use —a harbour now in actual use—and none of its competitors can show an equivalent. The marsh-fever may be extirpated at draining the marsh: it is said that the work can be done at an outlay of two thousand pounds.

From the port to the Beilan there is no difficulty whatever in laying down the rails; and the famous pass—the historic Gates of Syria—is pronounced to be an obstacle far less considerable than is supposed, and one that might be surmounted without much difficulty, and at a moderate expenditure. Upon this point I can give no opinion; but it seemed to me that the gradients of the roads traversing the pass were by no means severe, and that there is no difficulty to be encountered by a railway engineer at all comparable to that which has been overcome on the Great Indian Peninsular Railway, in rising from the low plain of the Koncan to the table-land of the Deccan, at the Ghauts fifty miles from Bombay. There is no necessity for costly tunnelling; that seems to be a point on which all are agreed.

Well, once over the Beilan Pass, there is no doubt that the railway must be taken on to Aleppo, the centre of the commerce of this whole region. It must traverse the Plain of Antioch, a task which by no means frightens the engineers; for strange as it may appear, it is much easier to carry a railway across a marsh than to carry a road; or, perhaps, I should rather say it is easier to keep a railway from sinking into a marsh than a road of equal width. Doubtless, the weight of the traffic is more equally diffused through the interposition of rails and sleepers.

Once across the Plain of Antioch a chain of hills rises up to block the way. They seemed to me to offer some difficulty, but Mr. Telford Macneil, who has very carefully surveyed this part of the country, has found a

narrow and somewhat tortuous pass a little to the south, along which the railway could be carried, so as to get past the hills shutting in the Plain of Antioch on the east. Then the objective will be, of course, Aleppo.

Now, when I left Aleppo, and crossed the little plain immediately surrounding the city, I found that I had in front of me a series of rolling hills, for the most part of limestone from which nearly all the soil had been washed away; some of the red earth which had once covered them and made them fruitful was retained in its place by the walls of gardens still existing here and there, but for the most part the hills were simply bare rock. The route lay right over a succession of these hills, which were placed by nature athwart the path of whoever has to make his way with anything like directness from Aleppo to Alexandretta. As fast as one hill was surmounted and descended another great ridge of rock rose in front, and had to be climbed and descended too. The thought occurred to me that if a railway had to traverse those hills to get to Aleppo from the sea, a great deal of very expensive cutting would have to be effected, and the work would probably occupy several years.

But it appears there is a route by which this line of formidable hills can be effectually turned. I owe the knowledge of this fact to Mr. Telford Macneil, who, as I have said, has himself professionally surveyed this part of the route. We may take it, then, that no real difficulty intervenes between Alexandretta and Aleppo, except the Beilan; and that the difficulty presented by that pass is not at all formidable.

Having reached Aleppo, the railway might be taken to the Euphrates, at a point south of Birijik, and down the right bank of the river to Anah, Hillah, or Bussorah. If Bussorah be considered too unhealthy for the terminus, the line could be prolonged for a hundred and ten miles further, to the Port of Koweit, on the Persian Gulf. That route would unquestionably be the shortest, the most direct, and the cheapest; the cost, at 7500*l.* per mile, not exceeding 6,350,000*l.* It is the route which, General Chesney designed, and Mr. W. P. Andrew, who has been the indefatigable advocate of a railway between the Gulf and the Mediterranean, prefers. But it has the great drawback of passing through a country which, however capable of supporting a large population, is, for the most part, uncultivated and unsettled; wandering tribes of Arabs roam over it to find pasture for their flocks and herds. For years to come a railway through that great wilderness would have no local traffic to bring it revenue, and the through-traffic on lines of such length never pays.

There is another route, from two hundred to two hundred and fifty miles longer, which was suggested by Colonel Herbert, formerly British Resident at Baghdad. He proposed to carry the railway from Aleppo, by the existing post route, to Birijik, Orfah, Diarbekir, Mardin, and Mosul to Baghdad; where it would recross the Tigris, and, traversing Mesopotamia, recross the Euphrates near Kurnah, and then go on to Bussorah, and if necessary to Koweit on the Persian Gulf. The cost of this line would be from 8,250,000*l.* to 9,000,000*l.*

The portion of this scheme which brings the line to Baghdad has many, and, as it seems to me, decisive advantages in its favour. But the recrossing of both the Tigris and the Euphrates so low down, where the beds of those rivers are wide and unstable, would be very costly and hazardous. That part of Colonel Herbert's plan will have to be considerably modified, and perhaps laid aside altogether. It seems to me that when the railway has reached Baghdad, whence there is steam communication with the Gulf, and all the East, enough will have been done to satisfy the requirements of one generation. We may rest and be thankful; and when our children desire to complete the great work, they will, doubtless, carry the next section not to Bussorah and Koweit, but to Mohammerah and Bushire. At Koweit the line could have no further extension; the desert would effectually prevent its being carried on to Muscat or beyond. But from Bushire it might one day be carried forward to Bundar Abbas, and thence along the Mekran coast, between the mountains of Beloochistan and the sea, to join the Indian railway system at Kurrachee.

Only the very sanguine, or the very young, will, perhaps, look forward with much confidence to seeing the railways of India and those of Turkey thus linked at Kurrachee. The achievement is one which will probably be effected only in the remote future; but there seems to be no engineering difficulty whatever in the way: it is entirely a question of expense and of remunerative traffic. Mr. Gifford Palgrave visited every part

of the eastern shore of the Gulf, and he pronounces it to be not desert, but a country of average fertility, and fairly populated, with towns and villages dotted along the coast. In the beginning of the first volume it will be seen that this description is borne out by what we observed at Linga and elsewhere. With regard to the Mekran coast, I may here mention that at Kurrachee I was informed that there is a considerable distance between the shore-line and the hills, and that though the general character of the littoral is that of a sandy desert, it is in parts inhabited, and that there is no physical obstacle whatever to prevent a road or a railway being made along the shore parallel to the sea. The great need is water. A party of sportsmen who went some distance along the sandy plain between the hills and the sea, had to take a supply of water on camels. A railway train could carry water for its locomotive very easily; the difficulty arising from the arid nature of part of the country to be traversed would be by no means insuperable.

The distances from Baghdad to India by this route would be as follows:—from Baghdad to Mohammerah, 260 miles; from Mohammerah to Bushire, 250; from Bushire, along the shore of the Persian Gulf to Cape Jask, 750; thence to Kurrachee along the Beloochee coast, 700: in all 1960 miles.

But this question of the extension of the projected railway southward from Baghdad is not, I think, at present one that need be seriously considered. It is better to confine our attention to the task of connecting

that city by railway with the Mediterranean, seeing that it is already connected by steam navigation with the Persian Gulf. Putting the distance to be traversed at 800 miles, the outlay, at 7500*l.* per mile, would be 6,000,000*l.* Some authorities hold that a railway on the standard gauge might very well be laid at an average of 6000*l.* a mile, seeing that the Government would give the land free. This would, of course, reduce the capital required to 4,800,000*l.*

Of the fact that the railway could be carried over the present post route without extravagant outlay there can be no doubt whatever. The country from Aleppo to Birijik is for the most part level, and is quite free from marsh. A bridge over the Euphrates at this point will present no difficulty; the banks are firm, and the bottom chalk and gravel. The route thence to Orfah is easy. North-east of Orfah some low hills have to be crossed or turned to get to Diarbekir, a distance of about a hundred miles; and from Diarbekir south-east to Mardin there is a hilly country. To avoid the difficulties, such as they are, which are encountered by this detour to Diarbekir, it has been proposed to carry the line direct from Orfah to Nisibin, some thirty-five miles to the south-east of Mardin. In this way the line would be kept to the south of the hilly country. But it would not have the important city of Diarbekir as a source of traffic, unless a branch line were to be carried northward; and if that were done, there would be no great economy in taking the main line southward through a country thinly inhabited, and indeed no better than a desert. The post

route does not pass that way now, simply because there are no villages there to serve as resting-places, and supply food for the horses. The country from Orfah to Diarbekir, and from Diarbekir again southwards, forms the only part of the route about which controversy is possible. When riding over the ground, it did not seem to me to be very difficult; but of course the question is one for the engineers. From Mardin or Nisibin to Mosul, the long grass valleys, all bearing to the south-east, seem to have been specially designed for a railway, so well are they adapted for the purpose. At Mosul, the Tigris must be bridged; but the ground is firm, and the work can be easily effected. The Greater and the Lesser Zab, and two or three smaller rivers will have to be bridged before Baghdad is reached; but there is no obstacle other than that presented by those rivers to be encountered on the way from Mosul to that city.

If the line were constructed would it pay? That question is after all the crucial one. But the answer is not doubtful.

Along the whole route there are either towns or villages at every few hours' distance; in some parts I passed through a village every hour. The land is nowhere wild, it is either cultivated or used for grazing purposes. There is an abundance of labour available for the making of the railway, and a considerable settled population to use it when made. Without speaking of Alexandretta and Beilan, or the lesser towns, a railway carried along the post route will find traffic at Aleppo, with its 90,000 inhabitants; at Birijik, with 12,000; at Orfah, with 50,000; at Diarbekir, with 60,000; at Mardin, with

16,000; at Mosul, with 50,000; at Kerkook, with 20,000; and at Baghdad, with from 80,000 to 100,000. These centres of population would render the railway almost independent of the through traffic, which, however, could not fail to be enormous, for Persia, India, and all the East would be at one end of the line, and the Levant and all Europe at the other.

In the foregoing pages I have mentioned incidentally the caravans and the long lines of camels, which I either met or overtook, especially in the portion of the journey from Diarbekir westward. Crossing the Plain of Antioch, I saw passing the endless files of camels, and I have no doubt under-estimated them when I said that they numbered a thousand. The number of camels engaged in the carrying trade between Aleppo and Alexandretta is ten thousand. The cost of transporting a ton of goods from Aleppo to the port is from 4*l.* to 6*l.*—a sum quite prohibitory for many articles of commerce. The tariff throughout is equally high, and the result is, that the traffic, which is even now considerable, is scarcely one-tenth of what it would become if railway communication was established. We have seen that in Mosul a sheep can be bought for six shillings which in Constantinople would be worth a pound, and that as much bread is sold in the one city for a farthing as would be worth twopence in the other. The inequality of prices between places much nearer one another is equally striking. Wheat and oats are one-third the price at Orfah that they are at Aleppo; the cost of transport effectually prevents the markets from finding a level.

If a railway could be constructed without any difficulty, and would be certain to yield a fair revenue almost from the first, why has it not been constructed? The sum required is not one to terrify the capitalists of the present age. The Suez Canal cost more, and it now pays a dividend to its shareholders. The real obstacle seems to be a want of confidence in the power of the Turkish Government to protect property and life in the countries through which the railway would pass, and a consequent misgiving as to the possibility of carrying on business with regularity, and earning sufficient to pay interest on the capital invested. Hence a guarantee from the British Government is regarded as essential, so that whatever might happen, the investors would be sure of their dividends. The political and commercial advantages of having a second line of communication with India which would make her independent of the Suez Canal, would be so great that in the opinion of a Select Committee of the House of Commons "it would be worth the while of the English Government to make an effort to secure them, considering the small pecuniary risk which they would incur."[2]

That opinion was arrived at six years ago when the political advantages to be looked for were not supplemented as they have been this very year by political necessities of the most urgent nature. England has undertaken to protect the integrity of the Sultan's Asiatic dominions by force if Russia renews her aggressions, and she cannot shrink from the duty of ful-

[2] Report, Select Committee, House of Commons, 22nd July, 1872.

filling that obligation without abdicating her position in the East.

In Chapter IV. some of the new strategic conditions resulting from the acquisition of Kars by Russia are indicated. It is morally certain that Marshal Paskiewitch's plan of marching on Diarbekir will be carried out the next time hostilities are resumed between Russia and Turkey. If the Turks have the means, they will, no doubt, construct great works at Erzeroum to protect Asia Minor from an invading force, but whether they do that or not, the Russians can send a force from a point near Bayazid, by Lake Van and Bitlis, to Soart, whence they can spring at their own choice upon Diarbekir and Orfah, or Jezeerah and Mosul. Diarbekir is the key to the valleys of both the Tigris and the Euphrates—once there, they can decide whether they will move down the former to Baghdad, or down the latter to a point where they can command both rivers and reach the Gulf if they care to go so far.

How is England to bring her resources into play so as to prevent the Russians from establishing themselves in these great cities, for all practical purposes unfortified, in Northern Mesopotamia? As matters stand, she would be powerless to avert a blow aimed there. She could send troops to Baghdad from India, and to Cyprus from England, but how could she send them from either place to Diarbekir, with any certainty of anticipating her enemy, and preventing him from overrunning whichever valley the circumstances of the moment made most tempting to him? For it must be borne in mind that the

swift currents of those rivers will enable an army to move without fatigue or difficulty from north to south, while a force moving northwards must toil along a roadless country where rapid marching is out of the question. A regiment takes a fortnight to move from Baghdad to Mosul; it could glide down the river on rafts from Mosul to Baghdad in three days.

But if the railway from Alexandretta to Baghdad were constructed, either passing through Diarbekir or at a point only a couple of marches to the south of it, the whole situation would be changed. Troops could be forwarded in any requisite number from either terminus to the threatened point, and it would be always possible to have a force ready, to meet an army coming from Lake Van, superior in strength to the invaders. Now that England has begun to accustom herself to the idea of fighting Asiatics with Asiatics, the Russian masses need not trouble us much. India is an inexhaustible reservoir of men, which will supply a bold and successful government with the means of outnumbering the troops of the Czar—always prone to rely a little on numerical superiority—on whatever fields of battle we may select.

Still, if the British Government, swayed by economical considerations, should decide to refuse to guarantee three and a half per cent. on the capital required for a railway, which might, under circumstances which may any moment arrive, be of priceless value to England and India, as well as to the Turkish Empire of which we have assumed the protectorate, is there no other means by

which confidence can be given to investors and the necessary millions procured?

With some diffidence I would venture to answer this question in the affirmative. The government of Napoleon III. did not accord a pecuniary guarantee to the Suez Canal Company, but it gave the Company powerful support, which was, perhaps, in the long-run, fully as efficacious. If the Ottoman Government be as desirous of seeing this railway made, as the Khedive was to have the Isthmus of Suez cut, the British Government can have no difficulty in playing the same part, in giving encouragement and confidence to all concerned, that the French Emperor afforded to a work scarcely surpassing it in importance.

It is to be presumed that the Ottoman Government will not object to give—indeed, I understand that they are quite prepared to give—the ground required for the construction of the railway and a certain extent of land on either side where it passes through State domain, and also to concede the right of working all coal-fields and mines, not in actual operation, within ten miles of the line, subject, of course, to a royalty.

But that is not sufficient, and the Ottoman Government is not in a position financially to give any help of a more direct kind. The Khedive of Egypt undertook to supply M. de Lesseps with the labour required to make the canal; that form of subsidy was subsequently disallowed, and had to be commuted into a money payment. The Ottoman Government cannot give the money, and it ought not to be asked to furnish

labour for which assuredly the fellaheen employed would never get paid.

Still something might be done which would be an equivalent. America furnishes us with the example which we need. When discussing this very matter in Constantinople with a gentleman who had spent many years in the United States, I heard with great interest a description of the way in which different "town-lands," the inhabitants of which desire to open them up, are made responsible for a certain proportion of the cost of a line. The settlers agree among themselves, and with the Company, to take shares, for which they issue bonds bearing interest, and they provide for that interest in the local rates. As the line gets traffic it pays the dividends to the town-lands owning shares, and consequently less money has to be raised with the rates to pay interest on the bonds. The bonds are readily taken by bankers, contractors, iron merchants, &c. And thus the money is easily found for the payment of the shares. In a certain sense, shares and bonds are different names for the same thing; in the result the town-lands own wholly or in part the railway which was started on the credit of their rates. They have made the railway, and the railway, in building up their prosperity, pays them the dividends which in this country would go into the pockets of the ordinary shareholder.

Afterwards, in turning over the pages of Sir Morton Peto's valuable work, already referred to, I lighted on the following passage:—"The influence of railroads on the value of real estate along the lines and in the cities in

which they terminate, is so well understood in America, as to have afforded important facilities to their construction. It is not the public who are invited in America to take railway shares; they are subscribed for in a wholly different manner. In order to promote the construction of a line, not only does the state which it traverses frequently afford it facilities with respect to land, but pecuniary facilities are often given by the cities and towns giving securities for certain amounts on their municipal bonds. The cities in which it is to have its termini also agree to subscribe for portions of its share capital, and so do the inhabitants of the towns and villages through which it is to pass." And the writer adds, "This is a very important feature of the American railway system, inasmuch as it gives the inhabitants of each district which a railway traverses a direct local and individual interest in the promotion and well-working of the line. Every one, in fact, is interested in contributing traffic to his own railway." [3]

Would it not be possible to raise sufficient capital on the system here indicated to enable the railway from Alexandretta to Baghdad to be constructed in sections? If the great cities through which the railway would pass, and Baghdad, in which it would have one terminus, were to bind themselves to guarantee 40,000*l.* a year as a minimum dividend on 1,000,000*l.*, the first section of the line to Aleppo could be constructed, and it would most certainly pay a dividend, large or small, after the first year. Four per cent. might very reasonably be looked

[3] "Resources and Prospects of America," p. 273.

for, seeing how large is the traffic, even at present, between the Syrian city and the Mediterranean; when goods could be cheaply and rapidly carried in railway waggons, instead of being transported on the backs of camels, at five or six pounds per ton—to say nothing of the deterioration of value from exposure and jolting on the way—it might fairly be calculated that the existing trade would be quadrupled almost at once. The earnings of the section at work would set free the guarantee of the towns, and the capital for constructing the next section could be easily procured, and so on until the whole line was completed.

The different cities interested would find the burden light and the results very profitable. The completion of even one section would give an impetus to their trade; with the railway at Birijik on the Euphrates, Orfah would be practically nearer to the sea than Aleppo is now, and the whole country would feel the benefit. The towns might be aided by the provinces, for the increased prosperity would be shared by every village. The vilayets of Aleppo, Diarbekir, and Baghdad, and the great pashalik of Mosul could very well afford to guarantee amongst them if not 40,000*l.* a year like the cities, at all events half that amount, which would enable the great work to be carried to completion more speedily. The Ottoman Government itself, poor as it is, might consent to assigning some portion of the revenue derived from one or other of these vilayets for the same object. Suppose it hypothecated the saymé, or tax on sheep and goats of the Aleppo district, the

28,000*l.* a year would, with the sums guaranteed by the towns and the vilayets, enable more than 2,000,000*l.* to be procured for an object of great imperial as well as provincial importance. The 28,000*l.* would only be alienated temporarily, for the earnings of the line would restore it to the Government by paying the necessary dividends without external aid. And the Imperial revenues would be improved by the increased returns from the custom-house of Alexandretta consequent on the development of trade, and also by the enlargement of the area of cultivation inland, which would add, of course, to the government tithes.

The plan here suggested would be free from the objections which would certainly be found insurmountable if a simple guarantee of the Ottoman Government was in question. The sources of the different payments to be looked for would be clearly defined, and the financial affairs of the Asiatic Provinces being placed under the supervision of European Inspectors, we might expect with reasonable confidence that the money would be honestly collected and punctually handed over, say to the Ottoman Bank, for the payment of the coupons of the railway company.

The inducements to capitalists would not, however, be confined to certain specific payments to be made by the cities, the vilayets, and the Government. The land which the Government is prepared to grant on either side of the line would become of considerable value as each section was completed. A large agricultural population would certainly be attracted to the

land in question on account of the easy access to markets for raw produce, and the increased security which the vicinity of a railway would infallibly bestow. The working of minerals by adventurers paying a royalty would also bring revenue to the company not only as carriers but as concessionaires.

Of course the cities and the vilayets would have to raise the 60,000*l.* a year to be provided by them (as long as it was needed), by an addition to the rates which they at present have to pay. But the additional impost would be so trifling, spread over so large an area, that it would not occasion any hardship, if properly distributed and honestly collected. And it must be borne in mind that at least half the money raised would be spent in the country, and add from the very beginning to the general prosperity. The different villages along the route would gladly take contracts for the construction of embankments and the making of cuttings, and the money earned in that way would fertilize the whole district, and make the payment of a small additional impost yearly for, it might be hoped, only a very limited period, a matter of no moment.

In this way it seems to me that the Mediterranean and Baghdad railway might be financed. The operation does not seem to present greater difficulties than those so triumphantly surmounted by M. de Lesseps in the case of the Suez Canal.

CHAPTER XV.

VOYAGE TO CONSTANTINOPLE.

On board the Scamandre—Pilgrims returning from the Holy Land—The Port of Mersina—Tarsus—Adana—The Island of Rhodes—Relics of the Knights of St. John—Smyrna—Large commerce—A new quay—*Cafés chantants*—French superseding Italian and Greek—Railways—The Cambodia—The Dardanelles—Arrival at Constantinople.

It was after dark on the evening of the 17th May that I went on board the Scamandre, one of the finest steamers of the Messageries Company at Alexandretta, bound for Smyrna. The saloon was thronged with passengers, most of whom were French, returning from a pilgrimage in the Holy Land. Half a dozen priests were of the party, and Gethsemane, the Mount of Olives, and the Holy Sepulchre were on every lip. Some Americans, who had been also through

> "those holy fields
> Over whose acres trod those sacred feet
> Which, eighteen hundred years ago were nail'd,
> For our advantage, on the bitter cross,"

indeed, all the saloon passengers, were pilgrims returning from Palestine. I had come in a moment from a Mohammedan into a Christian atmosphere.

On the morning of the 18th, the Scamandre was at

anchor in the roadstead off the rising town of Mersina, a very pretty place, surrounded by gardens, and groves of orange and citron trees. The mountains rise majestically a little way inland, and the intervening plain appears to be well cultivated. But fever renders Mersina as unhealthy as Alexandretta. It has a population of 6000, and a large trade. The trade of Alexandretta and Mersina together amounts to about 3,000,000*l.* per annum, and there is a close connexion between the two ports. Cotton is exported in considerable quantities from Mersina to Smyrna and Liverpool, and wool and sesame and gall-nuts are also largely shipped.

Some of the passengers made an expedition to Tarsus, and reported on their return that there was an excellent road through gardens nearly the whole way; but that Tarsus, once "no mean city," was a miserable place, consisting of a few hundred houses, into which it was said a population of 12,000 was crowded in discomfort and filth. St. Paul's chapel was shown to the sight-seers, and the portrait of the great apostle was pointed out, painted in fresco on the wall. But as the head-dress was that of a Greek bishop, it is scarcely likely that the portrait is authentic.

From Mersina to Adana there is a fine road, thirty miles long, constructed a few years since by a pasha who was exiled to Adana from Constantinople. The making of this road has had a wonderful effect in developing the resources of the country through which it passes; the land is well cultivated, and the cultivators, having access to the port, have a market for their pro-

duce, and are thriving. So I was informed by a Greek gentleman who came on board at Mersina to go to Smyrna.

The Scamandre was two days at Mersina, landing and taking in cargo. On the evening of the 19th she left for Rhodes, and the next morning we were out of sight of land. In the afternoon, however, the coast of Asia Minor came again into view, and the snow on the mountain tops turned a beautiful rosy tint in the rays of the declining sun.

On the morning of the 21st May we were at Rhodes and nearly all the passengers went ashore to see the fine old town and the fortifications, which are for the most part just as the knights of St. John left them upwards of three centuries ago. The armorial bearings of the knights, beautifully carved in marble, are intact in the Strada di Cavaglieri; but those of the grand-master have been removed to Constantinople. The town is not exactly decaying, but there is little sign of life or business in it. The port is too shallow for vessels of considerable draft, and the large steamers have to anchor in the roadstead; this seriously interferes with the trade. The hills around the town are quite stripped of trees, and look bare and barren. The population is mainly composed of Greeks. Our stay on shore was very brief, for the steamer, having little cargo to take on board, left the island before noon.

The next morning at daylight we were in the splendid bay of Smyrna, the chief port of the Ottoman dominions. The tide of commerce was in full flow; the bustle of

life quite European. We landed at a splendid quay, a mile and a half long and fully sixty feet wide, built of granite in the most substantial fashion. This fine work has been completed quite recently by some French capitalists who procured a concession from the Government. Their enterprise has been amply rewarded; the fees received for all packages and passengers landed at the quay bring in a large revenue, and the facility it offers to trade is very great. On the land reclaimed along the shore by the construction of the quay, a line of palatial edifices is being erected for the most part by speculative Frenchmen. They are intended for hotels and business premises, and as the quay is not only the great centre of commerce, but is also a sort of marine Champs Elysées, the extensive row of large shops springing into existence may be expected to do well.

There are no less than nine cafés chantants of considerable size along the quay, and at night they are frequented by the foreign and the Christian elements of the population. But the Turk, more home-keeping than even an Englishman, never patronizes such places. The singers are for the most part German women; next to them come French artistes of the fourth class. Levantine singers have not as yet made their appearance at these temples of the muses, for temples most of them are, in outward semblance, at all events. They are nearly all on the model of the Parthenon, and they bear in Greek characters the name of Apollo, or Homer, or Olympus. In the evening the profuse gas illuminations of these institutions light up the quay and turn night into day.

The streets of Smyrna are not very narrow, and the pavements are not very bad; so carriages and carts are numerous. The population of two hundred thousand is the busiest I have yet seen in Turkey; it is also the least Asiatic in appearance and habits. Nevertheless eighty thousand of the people are Turks, a goodly number, but it is steadily declining, while the Christian population, which is more active and pushing, and is besides not burdened with the conscription, is steadily increasing.

A Greek banker told me that French was now fast becoming the common tongue of the Smyrniotes, superseding both the Italian and the Greek, which were a few years ago the languages in general use. This was owing not only to the circumstance that a considerable number of French people had settled in Smyrna in connexion with the works which had been undertaken with French capital, but to the fact that practically the only schools for girls were the French convents. There the girls were taught to speak French habitually, and when they married, it was generally to men who, having been similarly taught in the schools of the missionaries, were equally accustomed to its use. It thus became the language of the home, and the little children, now growing up, speak French as their mother tongue. The older Smyrniotes speak many languages, indeed those of almost every Mediterranean people; but now French has become the vulgar tongue of Smyrna, and the necessity for speaking half a dozen languages is no longer felt. Wherever I went, in the hotels, in shops, or places of business, French was apparently in universal use.

There are two short railways into the interior, made by English companies; one of them is certainly doing a profitable business; of the other I heard conflicting accounts, which I had not time to verify. In the town there is a tramway in connexion with the new quay; the cars are well filled, and the venture is said to be remunerative.

On May 23rd, in the evening, I went on board the Messageries Company's steamer Cambodia, bound for Constantinople. The next morning we steered past the site of Troy, and soon entered the Dardanelles. As we approached the little town of that name we heard the sound of guns; everybody started to his feet, supposing that the English and Russians were fighting for the possession of the straits. But we soon recognized the hollowness of the sound; the guns were not shotted and in due time we came upon H.M.S. Agincourt, and a turret ship gaily dressed out in flags in honour of the Queen's birthday. The cause of the firing was then apparent.

The Mediterranean had been placid as a silver lake all the way from Alexandretta onwards; but once we passed into the Sea of Marmora, we began to find all that changed. A strong wind came down from the Black Sea, and the water was very rough. The English passengers on board wore their ulsters, and the portion of the French pilgrims who had come on to see the capital, instead of going to Marseilles direct from Smyrna, looked decidedly uncomfortable.

The Cambodia anchored for the night in the Bos-

phorus, and at daybreak on the 24th May moved to the mooring set apart for the Messageries steamers in the Golden Horn. It is no part of my duty to describe Stamboul, and the Bosphorus at sunrise, when a white fleece-like mist is slowly rising up and disclosing domes and minarets and marble palaces, and all the wonders of the sea and shore; that has been done too often and too well to render it necessary for me to trouble the reader with any mention of what enchanted the eyes of the passengers on the deck of the Cambodia as she took her place in the Golden Horn that lovely May morning. I need only say that, glowing as the many descriptions have been, the scene did justice to them; not one of us felt the disappointment which the actual view of the highly praised so often entails.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONSTANTINOPLE BEFORE THE CONGRESS.

Anxiety in the Capital—Drilling conscripts—Russian visitors—Troops drawing closer to the city—A *coup de main* expected—Opinion of General Skobeloff—Visit to the Turkish lines—The Turkish soldiers—Military qualities—Their officers—Middle-class Turks—Ghazee Mukhtar—The political situation—The Sultan—Expected revolution—The ex-Sultan Murad—Bewildered Ministers—No controlling head.

I LANDED at Galata, and remained three weeks in Constantinople. It is a great and populous city, on a site unequalled in the world, a worthy prize for contending empires. And the evidence that there was no want of effort or of anxiety on the part of the empires which were in the lists was abundant everywhere. Russian officers, non-commissioned officers, and even privates were to be seen in the streets; Turkish conscripts were being assiduously drilled on the unfinished pontoon bridge over the Golder Horn, in the barrack yards, and, indeed, wherever there was an open space available. Steamers with troops or conscripts came in daily. General Baker Pasha and other English officers were seen moving eagerly about. The English Pasha lunched at the Pera Club, and General Skobeloff dined there in the evening.

The Russian lines could be seen from the low hills at the farther end of the Golden Horn, and the Turkish forces, hastily collected, were working continuously to make shelter trenches to resist the assault which was hourly expected. The British fleet was at Ismidt, close at hand, in case of emergency. The Treaty of San Stefano had been signed, but whether it would endure from day to day no one could tell. It was not yet settled whether the Congress would meet, and there was trouble and dismay on every side. Such was the state of things at Constantinople in the end of May.

In the first week of June it became known that the Congress would meet, but the situation continued as critical as ever, as the following note in my diary, bearing date June 5th, will show:—"The military situation is still regarded as exceedingly grave, though for the moment the immediate danger may be said to be averted, thanks to the meeting of the Congress having been agreed to at last. The victorious army which dictated peace a few weeks since has been drawing gradually nearer to the city, and is strongly suspected of a desire to provoke a collision with the Turkish troops in order to get an excuse for taking military possession of it in spite of the peace. The British fleet remains at Ismidt, though the station is now very unhealthy and an outbreak of fever and ague is daily expected, because the Russians make an excuse of the slightest movement of the fleet to advance their troops to points not an hour's ride from the capital. The Turks are hurrying up troops to the heights around, to guard against a *coup de main*,

It is now settled that the Congress will meet after all, but no one here is quite certain that it will lead to anything but a renewal of the war. The Russians apparently do not believe in peace; they are very sceptical about it. Their military preparations are continuing. They are organizing a very fine army in Bulgaria, and have already enrolled 65,000 Bulgarians; they intend to bring the number up to 100,000 within six weeks. Reinforcements are being constantly sent to the army concentrated before Constantinople, and the fortifications of Adrianople are being made very formidable. Russian generals state that there is ammunition sufficient for a twelve month's war south of the Danube, and their preparations in other respects are on a commensurate scale. General Skobeloff is confident that Constantinople can be taken at any time at the cost of two divisions, and the shores of the Bosphorus at the cost of three. He holds that the Turkish lines can be pierced at three places. The Turks are, in his opinion, without sufficient artillery; their works are not formidable in themselves, and there is nothing in the nature of the country to prevent the Russians from reaping all the advantages which an overwhelming superiority of guns should naturally give. Moreover, three Russian divisions at least are now armed with Peabody-Martinis (taken from the Turks at Plevna and elsewhere), while the Guards have got the Berdans.

"It is possible that General Skobeloff takes too sanguine a view of the matter. It is certain that Ghazee Osman and Baker Pasha do not share his opinion

that Constantinople has only to be attacked to be taken. The Ghazee holds that the Martini-Henris of the defenders, firing from the crest of the rolling hills along which the lines of defence run, will render the Russian artillery of no effect, for the big guns must come to the top of the opposite ranges of hills under the fire of the infantry to deliver their own with any accuracy. Shell fire in the open country has no terrors for soldiers lying in their shallow trenches. The Ghazee could have held Plevna, he declares, just as effectually if he had had no guns. It was the terrible fire of the breech-loaders which mowed down the Russians as they came up the hill slopes to the assault; the artillery hardly contributed to the strength of the defence. General Baker is of opinion that Constantinople is now safe from a sudden attack, and that in a fortnight it will be able to stand a regular siege."

I rode out to the Turkish lines, about three miles from the western end of the Golden Horn, and I was surprised to see that the Russians were much nearer at hand than I had imagined. A number of the tents which I at first supposed to be Turkish, were Russian. They were almost within the general line of the Turkish tents, and were within easy range of the spot where I saw Mehemed Ali, the Commander-in-Chief, Fuad Pasha, Baker Pasha, and other general officers engaged in a consultation. The Russians had not only massed their forces in the very positions which they would occupy if they contemplated an immediate attack, but, in some places, they pushed their outposts fairly up to the line of Turkish

outposts. General Baker spoke very highly of the tact and forbearance shown by the Turkish officers under the very trying circumstances. A little want of self-command on their part might have led to an engagement all along the line at any moment. It was difficult to understand the motives of the Russian Commander-in-Chief in pushing forward his outposts up to the Turkish lines if he did not wish to provoke a collision. The aggressive movement was most marked precisely in those parts of the Russian line occupied by the Imperial Guards acting directly under General Todleben's orders. It was said at the time that General Skobeloff, acting "insubordinately," impetuously pushed his men forward, but that was not the fact. General Skobeloff is a young officer, and his frank, open countenance denotes the perfect sincerity which all who know him assert to be his great characteristic. He is a fine handsome fellow, his fair complexion, blue eyes, and a beard and moustache of a brown inclining to auburn make him look uncommonly like an Englishman fresh from the Home Counties. He is the most generally liked of all the Russian officers by the Turks and English, but the fact that he has never been in the Guards causes him to be looked upon with much jealousy by the aristocratic hierarchy of his own service. It is also, I understand, imputed to him as a fault, that although only thirty-four he is already a general of a division, and until General Todleben took over the supreme command from the Grand Duke, was at the head of a corps d'armée.

The Russians whom we meet in the streets are heavy

and German in stride and air; very different from the alert Zouave-like Turkish soldiers who have been drilled on the French system. Many of them are tall, big-boned men, but on the whole I think the Turkish troops are more muscular and more capable of enduring long-continued fatigue and hardship: that is the opinion of English officers who have seen both in the field. General Baker speaks in the highest terms of the Turkish soldiers. He told me he knew of no army in the world that would do what the Turks did, and were then doing, without pay or prospect of pay or reward. While undergoing reorganization, they worked cheerfully night and day in fortifying the lines, and insubordination and skulking were unknown.

Every Englishman who has seen both armies in the field speaks well of the military qualities of the Russian troops, but of the Turkish rank and file all speak with enthusiasm. They are born soldiers, and if properly led, would be as formidable to-day as their ancestors were three centuries ago. But they are indifferently officered. There are some very intelligent staff officers, however, and two good generals have come to the front during the late war—Osman and Mukhtar. These generals are both of the middle class, and as such are representatives of the new *couche sociale* which is gradually making its influence felt in the empire.

The hereditary ruling class—the "Circassian Pashas" as they are called, because their mothers generally owed their position in their father's harems and affections to the fact that they were Circassians beautiful enough to

be bought at a high figure—never enjoyed the advantage of a Turkish "home" such as it is. The son of a rich and generous father and of a purchased mother is not, as a rule, subjected to wholesome influences in his youth. He cannot be expected to grow up with principles of self-denial implanted in his mind, or to acquire a habit of exerting himself and making himself useful. But it is different with the son of man who has to work for his living, and of a mother who, whatever her educational shortcomings, is very far above the status of a barbarian damsel, who never would have been imported into the harem but for her good looks. Ghazee Mukhtar is the son of a silk manufacturer at Broussa, and he has a share in the family business, which is still carried on. His eldest brother is at the present moment simply a major of artillery at Tripoli. He is a very strict Mussulman, though, like most Turks, whether strict or not, he is very tolerant. Even in the hour of battle he will not forget to say his prayers when the prescribed moment comes; he naturally, however, omits all that is superfluous on such occasions, and is as brief as possible in his devotions. He has but one wife. His only son, now a boy of twelve, will be sent, to school in England as soon as the present troubles are over. Four of the Pashas in the ministries appointed and dismissed at that time on an average once a week, were men of this middle-class type. These *novi homines* have generally one wife apiece, and look with something like contempt on the comparatively effeminate Pashas of the old school. The latter, however, have one redeeming virtue

which recommends them to Europeans. They are not jealous of foreign talent and energy. They have no personal objection to employ either whenever they think it worth while to get anything done out of the ordinary line. But though men like Osman and Mukhtar are quite willing to avail themselves of European knowledge and business aptitude, they much prefer to get assistance from the Frank in the form of advice and information upon which they can act themselves, and in acting acquire experience and credit. They are by no means desirous of seeing Europeans step before them to the front; they have their own way to make in the world. Baker Pasha is the only European who has been able to get at all before the public during the war, and even he, in spite of his talents and his influence, was for some time kept steadily in the background.

The political situation was, at that time as critical as the military. No one could tell what might happen from day to day. The Sultan felt his position acutely, and his health suffered from the strain. One day it became known that he was very ill; he spat blood, and a German doctor was called into consultation, his condition being considered disquieting. There was a great deal of malevolent gossip about the Sultan and his habits, but I am able to say upon the authority of men who were in daily business communication with his Majesty, that the stories put in circulation were calumnious inventions. His habits are simple in the extreme, and he commits no excesses. His attention to the affairs of government is unremitting; he is even nervously anxious to

know everything, even details which would be much better left to competent subordinates. He gives his ministers no rest; after being in council with him for the greater part of the day, he sends for them again at night, and reconsiders the matters already fully discussed. He is, in truth, fairly chargeable with fidgetiness and over-anxiety, but, assuredly, not with neglect or disregard of the interests of the State. His intentions are good; his desire is to do what is right and best for the Empire in its great extremity, but his inexperience in public affairs tells woefully against him. This is the real source of the vacillation which is at times painfully evident; he is never sure that a measure which has been resolved upon was not, after all, a mistake; and it is just as likely to be abandoned as carried through.

A change of ministry while I was at Constantinople was an almost weekly occurrence. The most distinguished generals were alternately the object of the imperial favour and of the imperial suspicions. The result was a complete want of confidence in the stability of the Government and even of the throne. While the city was in almost hourly anticipation of being assaulted by the Russian forces which every one knew were being pushed almost into the Turkish lines and massed as if for an immediate attack, there was a general impression that a revolution might happen at any moment. Abdul Hamid himself knew as well as any one that his tenure of power was most precarious. Fuad Pasha was the only general on whom he implicitly relied, and he kept

him about the palace for days when his military talents might have been of greater service elsewhere.

If Abdul Hamid had been dethroned, it is very certain that his brother could not have permanently replaced him and ruled the Empire. The ex-Sultan Murad is really of unsound mind—a prey to settled melancholy complicated with fits of fury which render him dangerous. He has lucid intervals, however, and, as we know, an attempt was actually made by a handful of malcontents to use his name as the watchword of a new revolution. It is very honourable to Abdul Hamid that, discarding the traditions of the House of Othman, he contented himself with severely upbraiding Murad for being booted and spurred on that occasion, in apparent readiness to come forth at the call of the rebels, and show himself to the troops.

The Sultan's inexperience will disappear in the rough school of adversity, and with it no doubt much of the vacillation which often places everything in jeopardy. His Majesty is possessed of fair abilities; his impulses are good, and he has no desire to shirk work; his weakness is rather that of intermeddling too much in matters which others could do better, if the undivided responsibility were left to them. But the great misfortune for the State was that of all the ministers replacing and displacing each other at Constantinople while the Russians were at the gates, there was not one of sufficient force of character to guide the Sultan and dominate the situation. Minister succeeded minister in every department, but none even professed, like General Trochu, to have a

"plan." Everything drifted; there was no controlling head anywhere. The only measure which was carried out with sustained purpose was that of bringing up troops and conscripts from every part of the Empire to man the lines between the Russians and the city. The Turks have always shown an instinctive capacity for managing their military affairs even when mismanagement of an astounding kind prevails in every other department of the Administration. There is no reason why a race which is able to organize its war department so well should not find it equally possible to manage others which certainly do not demand greater decision and promptitude. The explanation of the fact as we find it is simply this: the military administrators have from the nature of the case been specially trained for their work, while no special training is provided for the individuals employed in other departments.

CHAPTER XVII.

DIPLOMACY IN THE EAST: THE TURKISH MISSION TO CABUL.

A strong hand wanted—European diplomacy—An ex-Vizier on its action—It invented Bulgaria—Inventing Armenia—To whose profit?—Reforms already effected—The Russian policy—England and Turkey—Persia—Russian blunder at San Stefano—Possibility of their repairing it—English diplomacy—Persia and Afghanistan—Throwing those States into the arms of Russia—The Turkish Mission to Cabul—The Ameer on the situation—Protests his friendship for the Sultan—No hostile feeling towards England—The occupation of Quettah—Declines to go to war with Russia—"Why do not the English help Turkey?"

"WHAT Turkey wants," said a distinguished military Pasha, himself a Turk, "is a strong hand to turn the handle of the machine. All would then go well. The organization is as good as can be desired. There are admirable regulations and laws without number. Supply the motive power, and everything will work smoothly, and people will wonder that things were ever amiss."

And while this want of the strong arm has been so apparent in recent times, there has been no want of endeavour on the part of outsiders to add to the friction of the machine of State, and, if possible, to bring it to a dead stop.

In the course of a long conversation with a Turkish statesman, who had himself been Vizier, we discussed certain aspects of this question. "The European diplomacy," said his Highness with great energy, "gives Turkey no rest, and is always pressing upon us the necessity of reform. But it is itself an obstacle to reform; it prevents the measures taken from producing their natural fruit. It sets our populations by the ears, and what is done for the general benefit is turned against the Empire. Diplomacy invented Bulgaria. Christians and Moslems lived there contented enough, governing themselves and cultivating their lands, and having plenty of corn and cattle. There was no question of Turk or Christian between them, for they lived like brothers until discord was sown by foreign agents. The attempt was made two or three times before it succeeded. The inhabitants of the Christian villages themselves gave up the emissaries sent to organize an insurrection in 1867-8. But in time disturbances were created, and diplomacy declares it is all the result of bad government. Now, diplomacy having brought on us all the misfortunes which have come of that huge blunder, is inventing an Armenian question which had positively no existence previously. Who will profit by it? Not the Armenians, but Russia, whose game the European diplomatists have been playing. There are social inequalities; there is great room for improvement; but look at the progress that has been made in a few years! Institutions have been established which would have been deemed impossible at the beginning of this century, and people cry out because

everything is not transformed by them at once; they want social conditions which were arrived at in England by three centuries of conflict and bloodshed to be created in Turkey in three days! Is this reasonable? *Qu'on nous laisse tranquilles.* It is not known to what an extent the different communities throughout Turkey govern themselves; they have more in their own hands than the people of other countries. Yet everything is set down as the fault of the Government, and it is hampered and worried on all sides. How can things go on well with such a system? Our neighbours interfere in our affairs, not to aid us, but to add to our embarrassments, which would be sufficiently great in any case."

This view of the situation was not altogether devoid of plausibility, it seemed to me. But I thought I might venture to point out that so far as English diplomacy was concerned, its one object had been to strengthen the hands of the Turkish Government by procuring for the different classes of the Sultan's subjects the complete enjoyment of the rights which were guaranteed to them by the Government itself.

"Yes," returned his Highness, "that has been no doubt the object, but certainly at one moment the traditional policy of the British Government was lost sight of, and the Russian game was played, wittingly or unwittingly. We see the result now. Unless something be done to repair the disasters which have upset the whole equilibrium in the East, we shall be all lost in a few years. England is necessary to Turkey, that I know well; but it is equally certain that Turkey is necessary to England.

The designs of Russia are evident; I do not understand how any one of intelligence can fail to see what is in store for the East. The Eastern Question is an English quite as much as it is, unfortunately, a Turkish question, and in a sense even more so, for the object of Russia in trying to destroy Turkey is the more easily to destroy the English power in the East. The only possible ally for England in defending herself is Turkey. No other Power has any interest in joining her to keep Russia at a safe distance from India. The European Powers will let her take care of herself. Will Persia fight on her side? She is in the hands of Russia already."

I remarked that Persia could be brought to her senses by an expedition from India up the Gulf.

"No doubt that would render Persia cautious," said he, "but it would not get her to fight upon your side, for she would be still more afraid of Russia. I repeat, the only ally which England can count upon in defending her position in the East is Turkey. We are necessary to you, and you are necessary to us. Whether you acted prudently in allowing us to be crushed in the late war, time will tell. When the treaty of San Stefano was signed, I regarded the monstrous extent of its exactions as the sole plank of safety for Turkey. The provisions of the treaty were so unheard of, that they alarmed all Europe; they showed the Powers the voracity of Russian ambition. The Russian diplomatists for once overreached themselves. If they had only exacted what Europe would have thought reasonable, Turkey would

have been ruined; for whatever acquisitions Russia makes will be the stepping-stone to fresh aggressions. Her fixed object is to ruin Turkey and reduce England to the position of a secondary power in the East."

The fact was then generally known that England and Austria had come to an understanding that the extent of the Russian acquisitions set forth in the treaty of San Stefano should be considerably restricted, and I mentioned that to his Highness.

"Well," returned he, "that understanding may have the effect of opening the eyes of the Russians to the mistake they committed at San Stefano. They are quite capable of repairing that blunder, and appeasing the general alarm by making politic concessions which will avert the danger of a coalition. Turkey will then be in precisely the position which she would have occupied had the exactions at San Stefano been such as the European diplomatists might have regarded as reasonable, while Russia will be free to organize her acquisitions and prepare for another forward movement which may easily prove irresistible. For of course she will commence her next advance from points which, in the last war, she only reached with great difficulty and after much fighting. The action of England and Austria is now energetic enough, no doubt, but it comes rather late in the day. Had England, especially, helped us while Plevna still held out, how different would be the aspect of affairs at the present moment! As it is, if England, by her resolute attitude forces concessions from Russia and modifies the treaty of San Stefano, the only

result will be that the Muscovites will be placed in exactly the position which a less eager diplomacy would have placed them in when that treaty was signed —a position in which they will be free to assimilate what they have acquired while preparing to take all that remains."

The conversation at this point naturally turned upon Russian diplomacy, generally so skilful, and upon the errors which were unfortunately committed by those who had to encounter it.

"I do not think," said the ex-Vizier, "that the English way of managing Persia and Afghanistan is wise. At Teheran you find that the Russian influence is greater than your own, and your diplomacy renders the matter worse by making it evident to the Persians that England is dissatisfied with them; that she is sullen and even perhaps hostile. It seems to be much the same with Afghanistan. You are displeased with the Prince who rules that country, and perhaps he has given grounds for displeasure; you do not crush him as you might easily do; but you give him to understand that you are in a very ill-humour with him. He is, consequently, full of uneasiness and apprehensions, for he is not sure when your ill-humour may explode. This is the very way to play the game of the Russians, who are much more adroit. They, of course, represent themselves as the friends of the people who have reason to apprehend some hostile movement at your hands. So far as I can understand the matter, there is no necessity whatever for keeping Persia and Afghanistan in this

state of uneasiness, which naturally works very well for Russia. There is no parity of strength whatever between England and Persia, or England and Afghanistan When she has real ground of dissatisfaction with either she can crush them with ease; it would be an affair of an expedition, and six weeks. She can then impose what terms she chooses; but, unless it be necessary to strike, why disquiet those weak states with a perpetual manifestation of dissatisfaction, the causes of which they may very easily misunderstand? You thereby prevent them from looking to you to support them against a neighbour whom they have no great reason to regard with confidence; on the contrary, you suggest to them to look to that very neighbour for support against you, for they are never sure of what may be the result of the feelings of displeasure which they plainly see England entertains with regard to them. This seems to be a very serious mistake in your diplomacy."

I have not ventured to alter a word of this frank criticism, which, especially in view of pending events in Afghanistan, is worth attention. If there is one thing in which Turkish statesmen have nothing to learn from the statesmen of Europe, it is diplomacy; they have an instinctive aptitude for it, as the Turks, as a people, have for military affairs. With respect to the management or mismanagement of diplomatic communications with Afghanistan, I may mention that I received from a Turkish politician—not the ex-minister, be it understood—a minute and interesting account of what passed between the Ameer and the Envoy sent by the Sultan

to the Ameer in 1877. This "Turkish Mission to Cabul" attracted considerable attention at the time in India, but beyond the fact that the Envoy was the bearer of a letter from his Imperial Majesty to Shere Ali, little was known about it.

It appears that the Ameer received the Mission with great cordiality, and entered into a long discussion of the differences, even then somewhat menacing, between himself and the British Government.

The Turkish Envoy informed his Highness that his Imperial Majesty naturally had the interest of all Mussulman States at heart, as he was himself the head and champion of Islam. It was therefore certain that he would not give any advice which would be calculated to diminish the power or independence of his Highness's State, or any other which was a bulwark of the True Faith. On the contrary, he would wish to see Afghanistan strengthened, and his Highness's power and influence augmented; and it was with a view of contributing to that result that he sent the Mission to Cabul to make the Ameer acquainted with the real source of the danger which was threatening the whole of Islam. His Imperial Majesty understood that the Ameer was apprehensive with regard to the British Government, and had been making preparations as if to resist a movement from the side of India. Now, his Highness should bear in mind that England had long since given up all ideas of annexing Native States, even in India itself, where there were many which could not offer resistance, and could be annexed and held without difficulty, if the

British had any designs of that kind. What object could be obtained by annexing Afghanistan? The country was poor; it was far away from the parts of India where the English were well established; it would cost a great deal to govern it. The British Government would have to spend more money to garrison it and to administer it than the taxes to be got from the people would bring back to the Treasury. It was not, therefore, to be supposed that they would take the country for any profit to be made by the conquest; it would cost more than it would bring in. If avarice was a motive, it would be much more likely to induce them to annex some of the rich Native States in India, but not one had been annexed for a generation. The system was quite laid aside.

Again, it was urged by the Envoy that the British Government could have no desire to seize his Highness's territories for the sake of obtaining soldiers. There were so many people in India that the Government could not want more for any military purpose; and every one knew that the Afghans would not be soldiers for a Christian Government; they would be always in rebellion, and would be a great source of trouble. It was clear, then, that the English could have no designs upon Afghanistan, seeing that the country was remote and mountainous, and too poor even to repay what the Government would have to lay out in administering it, while the people, instead of being willing subjects, would always be giving trouble, and would never be likely to forget what their fathers did in the time of his Highness's father.

From the side of England, therefore, his Highness appeared to have no reasonable ground to expect aggression. But on the side of Russia, the Envoy continued, the real danger was to be found. That power was the enemy of all the Mussulman states, without exception. She was assailing the Sultan himself; she had destroyed the independence of Bokhara, of Khokand, of Khiva. She had not left a single state in Central Asia its independence. The fact that some of them were quite as poor as Afghanistan, had made no difference; what she wanted was territory, and to gratify her enmity towards all Islam by reducing it to subjection. It was therefore necessary that his Highness should see plainly that his real enemy was not England, for from her he had nothing to fear, but Russia, which would assuredly treat him as she treated all the other Mussulman princes.

His Highness, the Ameer, listened to this exposition of the political situation with great attention, and then proceeded at considerable length to give his views thereon. It was a mistake, he said, to suppose that he was hostile to the British Government, or wished to make war upon England; but the British Government was pressing upon him, and it was necessary that he should not be caught unprepared. They had taken possession of Quettah, and established a force there, looking in at Candahar. If an armed man places himself at the back door of your house, what can be his motive, unless he wants to find his way in when you are asleep?

To this the Envoy replied that the occupation of Quettah might very well have a different object. Beloochistan was always giving trouble, and the Khan of Khelat himself was glad to get a British force at Quettah to keep the country in order. It was not at all likely that the post was occupied with a view to the seizure of Candahar, for the possession would be valueless to England. What would she gain by holding so distant a place at great cost, and against the will of the Afghans? As for Quettah, the Khan and the people were glad to see the English there, and only a handful of men were required to occupy it. But even supposing that the English had gone to Quettah without regard to the Ameer's susceptibilities, would it not be better to try and come to some understanding on that point, instead of playing into the hands of the Russians, who were the real enemies of Islam, and therefore of Afghanistan, which was one of the chief Mussulman States? His Highness had received quite recently two, if not three Russian envoys, and had actually sent one himself to Tashkend. It was also said that a Russian force of 5000 men had approached the boundaries of Afghanistan, near Balkh. All that seemed to many people to indicate that his Highness was showing greater favour to Russia, which was at war with Islam, than to England, the only Christian power which was willing to do what was right by the Mohammedan Powers.

To this Shere Ali replied that he had not shown any special favour to Russia; he had received the

envoys in question simply because the Russian frontier had now very nearly approached his own, and it was necessary to know what the Russians were contemplating. The 5000 men who had come near his frontier came there without his invitation, and he naturally wished to find out the object of their coming. He sent a messenger to Tashkend, with a letter to General Kaufman, as a civility, and also to ascertain the purpose of the approach of the body of troops. But in all that there was no thought of allying himself to Russia. The English used to have an envoy permanently at Cabul, but they withdrew him of their own accord.

The Turkish Envoy said that the English were desirous of having a regular mission at Cabul, but his Highness had refused his consent, and that appeared to have given rise to an impression in India that his sympathies were not on that side.

Shere Ali declared that personally he had no objection whatever to having Englishmen in Cabul representing their Government; but the Afghans were not like the Turks, tractable and prepared to submit like civilized people to what the Government wished. Some one would feel offended at the presence of an Englishman, and would perhaps shoot him. If anything of that kind happened, the British Government would at once make himself (the Ameer) responsible, although by no possibility could he prevent it. The result would be very serious, and it seemed to him better not to run the risk. He had only partially succeeded in making the wilder sort of people obedient and well behaved. If all were

like the people of Stamboul, then, of course, he could do as he pleased in regard to foreigners. The Russians sent a native of Samarkand on their last mission. As long as the English wished, they kept a native of India as their representative in Cabul.

These matters being fully and very amicably discussed, the Sultan's envoy broached the subject of an alliance between Afghanistan and Turkey against the common enemy, which was Russia. By coming to a good understanding with England, it was impressed on the Ameer he would find his hands free to assist the oppressed Mussulman States of Central Asia, and materially aid the Sultan in defending the cause of Islam from the Muscovite aggression.

The Ameer heard this proposal very patiently, and then gave a long and argumentative statement of his reasons for declining to enter into the proposed alliance. "Afghanistan," he said, "was too distant from Turkey to give assistance to the Sultan's troops in the field, or to receive aid from them, and he was not powerful enough to cope with Russia single-handed, in Central Asia. If he made war against the Russians, he would be face to face with them, and the Sultan could not possibly send him any help. What was the use of his incurring certain defeat? It could do the Sultan no good. He hoped the Sultan would be able to defend himself and prove victorious over his enemies. He was sorry, that from the nature of the case he could not help the Sultan with his Afghans. But why did not the English help Turkey? They could send their

soldiers everywhere, for they had a great number of ships; they could give the Sultan all the assistance that would be necessary to beat the Russians; but Afghanistan was too weak and too far away to be of any weight in the struggle. If the English were the friends of the Sultan, why did they not help him?

My informant did not mention what argument the Turkish Envoy advanced to turn the edge of this sarcastic reference to the attitude of England, whose friendship for Islam he had been vaunting. In all this diplomatic fencing the Afghan certainly held his own, and he chose his ground with great ability. The fact that he was really leaning to the side of Russia, not as against Turkey, but as against England was, however, apparent, although he very plausibly explained away some of the circumstances which indicated the drift of his policy.

When the ex-Vizier spoke of the error which the English diplomacy was making in keeping Persia and Afghanistan constantly aware that Great Britain was very much dissatisfied with them, and that some day they might feel the weight of her displeasure, I could not help thinking that he must have had the particulars of this singular interview between the Sultan's Envoy and Shere Ali in his mind. It is very natural for an oriental ruler to imagine that when a Power like England sulks, she meditates hostilities. And of course he casts about for such support as he can find; if Russia willingly offers it, he will not refuse, although acceptance may involve eventual ruin.

CHAPTER XVIII.

GLOOM IN THE CAPITAL: THE SICK AND WOUNDED.

General discouragement—Dangers of an assault—Threat of the Grand Duke Michael—General Todleben—Hasty construction of lines of shelter trenches—General Baker—Great mortality from sickness—The refugees—The Stafford House Committee—The sick and wounded in the hospitals—Inadequate medical staff—Turkish surgeons—Defective education—Sufferings of the wounded during the winter campaign—After effects—Mortality amongst the surgeons—And newspaper correspondents—Death of Mr. McGahan—Bulgarian sympathy.

At the end of May and in the first half of June, the most profound discouragement prevailed in Constantinople. It was not until the Congress was finally decided upon by the great Powers that an assault on the city by the Russian forces ceased to be generally apprehended, and it was only by the 10th or 12th June that such an assault could have been resisted with a probability of success. Even at the end of May there were no Turkish lines of any strength in existence except on paper. After the sudden advance of the Russians to within a few miles of the city at the very time the treaty of San Stefano was being signed, the Turkish generals occupying the intervening ground began to make shelter trenches; but the Grand Duke Michael sent word that if lines were con-

structed, he would at once enter the city. Thereupon the making of the field-works was of necessity discontinued.

When General Todleben succeeded the Grand Duke as commander-in-chief, the aspect of affairs could not be regarded as undergoing a change for the better, for the troops around the city were concentrated in positions which seemed to be chosen with a view to an attack in force which there was on the Turkish side no adequate means of resisting. General Todleben did not, however, hold the Grand Duke's arrogant language about the construction of defensive works, and trenches were very cautiously and unobtrusively made in the positions which needed them most.

Things were at this stage when General Baker arrived, and he induced the Turks to complete the lines with all speed, so as to be prepared for the emergency which was apparently at hand. The troops were set to work, and they toiled night and day with the greatest good-will. Up to that time the Russian staff officers were in the habit of coming into the Turkish lines, and, of course, carefully noting the dispositions of the defending force; but Baker Pasha succeeded in putting an end to that abuse, strangely acquiesced in even by Mehemet Ali Pasha himself, though he was a European, and, of course, familiar with the usages of military men less confiding than Turks. In a fortnight the Turkish position was so strengthened, and the reinforcements brought up were so numerous that the city was almost safe from the risk of being carried by assault. Then came the announcement

of the Congress, and it was felt that all danger of an immediate catastrophe was over.

Still the situation was one of great gloom. Sickness prevailed in the city, and in both the Russian and the Turkish camps around it. The unhappy refugees who had fled to the capital before the advancing Russians were dying by hundreds of fever, the result of hardships and want. The mosques, where they had been sheltered during the winter, were no longer available, for the close packing of so many thousands under each roof would, in the heat of summer, have bred a pestilence. The miserable wretches were, therefore, sent across the Bosphorus in ferry-boats, and thousands were landed at Scutari and in the neighbourhood in the course of a single day. Two thousand five hundred men, women, and children, expelled in one afternoon from St. Sophia while the rain fell in torrents, were landed thus at Scutari, where there was shelter for only four hundred. The inhabitants made a subscription, and provided as many as they could with food; but several hundreds died of exposure in the course of a few days. St. Sophia was closed to the public for six weeks after the necessary expulsion of its occupants, for all the cleansing and purification which it underwent at the hands of the sanitary authorities could not suffice to banish the seeds of pestilence without a long quarantine.

On the 12th June there were 50,000 sick and wounded soldiers on the hands of the Ottoman Government, and 22,000 of these were in and around Constantinople. To prescribe and care for the 22,000, there were 200 medical

men! Dr. Symons Eccles, of the Stafford House organization, in a report on the state of affairs in the beginning of May, states that the government resources were strained to the utmost; every available native medical man was engaged, and others had been brought from the Continental medical centres, but it was simply impossible to treat the numbers of sick and wounded properly; the small medical staff had neither time nor means to deal with each case as it required to be treated. Many of the foreign practitioners who had been engaged for a short term did not know the language of their patients, and being equally ignorant of that of their subordinates, they could not get their directions carried out or enforce their orders.

The regular hospitals being overcrowded, barracks and other buildings ill adapted for the purpose were converted into temporary hospitals, and in them every disease and injury became aggravated by what Dr. Eccles termed "hospitalism." Of the 4000 wounded, 1000 were convalescent, but many even of those were maimed for life, while others were in such a deplorable state that they were unfit either for active service or for ordinary labour. Of those whose wounds were not yet cicatrized, some were suffering from gangrene or erysipelas, or hectic or hybrid fever. The wounds of others, instead of healing, became scorbutic and ulcerated.

Of the unwounded sick, the majority were suffering from nervous exhaustion and great loss of flesh, and the depression of spirits prevalent amongst them rendered them very liable to contract the prevalent fevers. The

hardships which the men underwent in the field fully accounted, in the opinion of the medical men, for the state of those in the hospitals; the only wonder is that the number of victims was not even greater. Fuad Pasha's division, which had the task of protecting the disorderly retreat of Suleiman Pasha's army, was for a week fighting all day and marching all night, with scarcely an hour's interval of rest, and during that terrible week the men were three days altogether without food.

Nearly every sick man in the hospitals had enlarged spleen. Ague had attacked nearly the whole of them at one time or the other. The inmates of all the hospitals, according to the doctors, were "anæmic, scorbutic, subject to ague, and generally ill in mind as well as body."

When visiting some of the hospitals, I learned many particulars of the dread hardships of the winter campaign. The wounded were exposed in the early days of their injuries to the most fearful suffering and hardships; during prolonged retreats they were not only uncared for surgically, but had not ordinary necessaries of life. The weather was at times fearfully severe. At Christmas, north of the Balkans, Dr. Lake told me, ten men were frozen to death on sentry duty in one night. We may judge from that what the wounded suffered from the cruel winter during the retreats when there was neither food nor rest even for them. As Dr. Eccles very truly said, it was due to the temperate and regular habits of life of those men—and I may venture to add to the iron constitution of the average Turk—that any of them are alive.

Most of the patients in the hospitals were men of the reserves who were called out after the younger and more vigorous men had been in part used up in the previous campaigns. They were not equal to the men of the Nizam or regular army. They were depressed by thoughts of their starving families at home, and had not the spring and energy which enabled the regular soldier to bear up against adverse fortune. General Baker mentioned to me that towards the close of the campaign the generals found a great difference in the quality of the troops, arising from the large infusion of the men of the Redif into the army—mostly middle-aged or elderly fathers of families, preoccupied with family cares. The men drafted into the ranks for the defence of Constantinople were the regular conscripts—young men for whom the military life, after the first plunge, has charms, and who are at all events not saddened by thoughts of wife and children lacking bread in the distant village.

It was unfortunate that while things were in this state, the Stafford House Committee found itself compelled to close its hospitals for want of funds. Mr. Barrington Kennett, the able and indefatigable Chief Commissioner of the Committee, left Constantinople for England early in June. I was present when Dr. Lake and Dr. Roe handed over two hospitals near the Stamboul railway station to Marco Pasha, chief of the École Militaire. These hospitals were temporary wooden structures in the gardens of the old seraglio, and were under the charge of Dr. Roe. One was built by the Turkish Government, and was well adapted for the

purpose. It consisted of a long ward, with windows at opposite sides between every two beds, to secure ventilation. When these windows are open, the air of the ward is of course constantly renewed, but the Turks closed them at every opportunity. The arrangement of the other hospital close by was, therefore, far better. The whole of one side of the building came out bodily in fine weather, and a sheet of canvas depending from the edge of the roof excluded superfluous sun and kept out rain. The shelter offered to the inmates was complete, and the ventilation could not be interfered with by the patients. This hospital was designed and built at a cost of 500*l.* by Baron Mündy, a German, and presented by him to the École Militaire.

Attached to each of these hospitals, while under the flag of the Stafford House Committee, there had been one of the German sisters of charity sent out by the Queen of Saxony. They took their departure when the buildings were handed over to the Turkish Administration—another misfortune for the patients.

The dressers and attendants employed by Dr. Lake, both in the Mündy Hospital and previously in the ambulances under his charge, were Turks whom he trained to the work. He spoke well of their intelligence and willingness to obey orders. He found no difficulty in making them understand how to apply dressings, prepare lotions and poultices, &c., and in a very short time they became quite punctual and alert in the performance of their duties. But he saw that they were paid regularly, and made them understand that good

conduct would bring promotion. They were very honest. One man, indeed, stole a blanket, but he was detected by another Turk, who thrashed him severely, spat in his face, and took back the blanket and brought it to the doctor.

With regard to the wounded soldiers, Dr. Lake informed me that he never met with any who refused to allow a limb to be amputated. It is well known that an Arab would prefer to die rather than have a limb cut off. The feeling is more or less common to all Mussulmans, and seems to have reference to the necessity of making a good appearance on the day of judgment. It would be quite inconsistent with the dignity of a true believer to hop into Paradise on one leg. But this consideration has not so much weight with the Turks as with other Mohammedans. The unwillingness to submit to severe operations appears to have its origin mainly in the distrust of the skill and care of the ordinary run of the Turkish surgeons.

These young men are not taught in the École Militaire how to perform operations. Dissection is regarded as unholy. The students listen to lectures, but in no department are they taught practically as medical students are taught in Europe. They are not made to walk the hospitals. The Government finds them in clothes, food, and lodging, and when their course is finished sends them to the army. When they have to remove a limb, they cut it off as best they can, and never trouble themselves about the subsequent progress of the case. They have no ambition, for there is no motive for exertion. They enjoy no consideration in the

army, are badly paid at all times, and their pay, such as it is, is now almost always in arrears. They are therefore indifferent to their duties, and shirk work as much as they can.

Nevertheless there are some exceptions, and if the system were improved, the Turkish surgeons would no doubt improve too. Their *morale* is now said to be very low. I have heard of cases in which military surgeons did not scruple to appropriate to their own use, and even to sell, the comforts and the medicines intended for the sick. But when men have been six and even twelve months without their pay, they will do strange things sometimes to get the means of living. And while setting down so much that is to the discredit of the Turkish medical officers, it is but fair not to omit here reference to a fact alluded to in a previous chapter, which would reflect credit on any body of men—the self-denial and patriotic pride of the Turkish surgeons who were left in charge of the sick after the evacuation of Erzeroum, in refusing the offer of the Russian Government to pay them their salaries in silver at the same rate that the Russian medical officers engaged in the same work were paid. They declined the proffered roubles, saying that they received pay only from their own Government! There was something really noble in this, for, as a matter of fact, they were in a state of semi-starvation at the time, the Turkish Government being unable to pay them regularly.

The Stafford House Committee maintained from time to time during the war and subsequently ten hospitals,

with 1710 beds. There were, besides, four field ambulances. Two ambulances were on the Lom, and one on the Balkans; the latter made a wonderful forced march, falling back with Suleiman Pasha's army to the Rhodope Mountains with three hundred wounded, who would have been infallibly murdered by the Bulgarians had they been left behind.

The representatives of the Committee also did good work in succouring the wounded brought by railway from the front to Constantinople during the last terrible days of the campaign. A surgeon came along with each train, and dressed the wounds of the sufferers in the carriages. Soup-kitchens were organized at certain points along the line, and when the trains stopped, the wounded—who had been often two days without food—received a basin of soup or other nourishment. Beds were also provided for numbers who would otherwise have had to lie on the floors of the carriages without any protection from the jolting or the fearful cold.

The refugees crowded into the same trains, and even clung to the foot-boards and lay upon the roofs of the carriages. Many women and children were taken from the roofs at Constantinople frozen to death; many fell off on the way into the deep snow and perished. Boards were laid over the couplings from carriage to carriage, and all who could place themselves thereon did so with eagerness, for to stay behind was to be butchered. Of course these temporary floorings between the carriages made the trains stiff, and it was necessary to go very slowly round curves. Matters were made worse by the

fact that the villagers coming on foot actually used the railway as a road, and could hardly be induced to get out of the way of the trains. The transport of the wounded was a very slow and difficult business, and many of them died on the way. The Committee gave 40,000 rations to the wounded *in transitu* and upon their arrival within the lines of Constantinople. The hospital at Gallipoli was handed over a few weeks later on, like those in Constantinople, to the already overtasked Turkish staff.

It was much to be regretted that this organization should have come to an end at a moment when so much remained to be done. But that regret must not render us unmindful of the incalculable amount of good which it was the means of accomplishing. The munificent sum of 40,500*l.* subscribed in England and India enabled the committee to save thousands of lives and to assuage suffering of the most excruciating kind. In Armenia with Mukhtar Pasha's army, in Bulgaria, in Roumelia, and afterwards, in Constantinople and at Gallipoli, the ambulances and hospitals of the "Stafford House Committee" succoured sick and wounded soldiers under every difficulty, and often in circumstances of the most imminent danger from the fire of the enemy. The Russians on the Lom deliberately opened an artillery fire upon a large field-hospital full of wounded men, and destroyed it, disregarding its Geneva cross and its distinctive flags, which they had seen for days before without molesting. I heard full details of this barbarous outrage from the medical men in charge of the

field-hospital, and there can be little doubt that the excuse that the tent was supposed to contain troops was an after-thought. Of the surgeons sent out by the Committee two died and eleven were attacked with either typhus or typhoid fever. The Red Crescent Society indeed lost more men; out of fourteen struck down by fever, seven died. It says something for the vigour of the English constitution, that out of the thirteen English surgeons attacked by the same disease only two succumbed. Eleven sisters of charity died of disease taken while attending the sick and wounded patients in the hospitals.

The sickness and mortality during the campaign, and subsequently, spared none who were with the armies on either side. Of the newspaper correspondents six lost their lives, and every one of the rest had at one time or another to leave the front through dangerous illness. Mr. McGahan, the distinguished special correspondent who made a name in the Khivan Expedition, was removed to the British hospital at Constantinople early in June, suffering from spotted typhus of the worst kind, and he died two days afterwards. It was supposed that he caught the fever in the Russian camp. Typhus and typhoid were frightfully prevalent amongst the Russians both in Roumelia and Armenia. In General Skobeloff's division alone there were, on the 10th June, upwards of five hundred cases of severe typhus, though his camp was the cleanest and best cared for of all. The returns made up to the beginning of May showed that 28,000 deaths had occurred from typhus in and around Erzeroum

since the termination of the war! The insanitary condition of the Russian camp outside Constantinople was something incredible. The Turks have nothing to boast of, but compared to the Russians they are cleanly and their camps are endurable. When campaigning, the Turks as a rule did not throng into the villages; they bivouacked in the open. The Russians preferred the shelter of the villages, into which they swarmed. Around every hovel, under the very eaves, there soon arose a mound of filth which, of course, converted the overcrowded interior into a forcing-house of typhus. The Turk, with all his indifference to sanitary considerations, does not pollute the very spot on which he sleeps and eats.

Mr. McGahan's death caused a feeling of something like dismay in the little European colony at Pera, which was already disturbed by the occurrence of numerous casualties from the prevailing epidemics. He was going about amongst us in good spirits and apparently in good health two or three days previously to his sudden seizure. He was only thirty-five years of age, and, though prematurely bald, he looked even younger. Everything seemed to promise a long continuance of the brilliant career which opened for him so recently after a long and, I believe, bitter struggle to get a firm footing in the world of journalism. He won his spurs on the *New York Herald*. He represented that paper in the voyage of the Pandora to discover the North Pole. The expedition returning unsuccessful, he penetrated to Khiva in spite of the Russians on the one

hand and the wild Turcomans on the other, and made his fortune at a blow. He became a great favourite with the Russians, who decorated him; and he formed many friendships in the recent campaign. General Skobeloff came in from the lines before Constantinople to visit him in the hospital as soon as he heard that he was stricken with fever. On the way he heard of the fatal termination of the illness, and wept with grief at the news; he went on to the hospital to take a last look at the body. McGahan, he said, was a dear friend whom he had come to regard as a brother. The General and other Russian officers followed his body to the grave, and threw the first spadefuls of earth upon it. The sincere grief of the most dashing and devil-may-care of the Russian generals is a tribute to the exceptional qualities of the departed journalist. General Skobeloff is not a man to be affected by death; his own life he holds as cheap as a soldier should. The mere fact of his setting out to visit poor McGahan when he heard he was suffering from black typhus is a proof of that. But he loved and respected McGahan for his inherent worth, his unfailing courage, and a certain military instinct which would have made him a first-rate officer, if destiny had not willed that instead of leading soldiers he should chronicle their exploits. He had wonderful endurance, and showed entire disregard of hardships and danger in the three campaigns which he went through in Central Asia, in Spain, and in European Turkey. General Chambers and other Americans, and many English residents attended his funeral. Some Bul-

garians placed a wreath upon the coffin, and declared that emancipated Bulgaria would erect a statue to his memory. McGahan acquired a great reputation in Bulgaria by the vigour with which he unearthed and denounced the atrocities which brought Mr. Gladstone into the field and paved the way for all the calamities that have since overtaken the Ottoman Empire. His name is enshrined in patriotic Bulgarian songs, which will be sacred hymns in the new principality.

CHAPTER XIX.

AND LAST.

Differences of race and religion—Possibility of combined action—An organized strike—Turks and Jews, Greeks and Armenians, unite for a common object—An Israelite on the condition of the Jews in Turkey—Stupidity of some of the Turkish departments—Complete toleration—The Greeks—Greece regarded as the heir to Constantinople—A Greek view of the situation—Self-control of the Turks—The Anglo-Turkish Convention—The new reforms—Danger of weakening the framework of the Empire—The end.

WHILE I was at Constantinople an incident occurred which showed clearly that even the differences of race and religion are not insuperable barriers to union and combined action. The wool-sorters of the capital are a numerous, and at certain seasons they are an important, but ordinarily they are by no means a united body. The Turkish sorters will not work with Greeks, nor the Greeks with Jews or Armenians. Matters were in this state when the depreciation in the value of the paper money, and the rise in the price of provisions, reduced the wool-sorters, in common with all other working men, to great straits. They asked the merchants for an advance in the rate of wages, but the request was refused. To the surprise of everybody the

wool-sorters of the different races, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, and Jews, at once combined; elected a Jew and an Armenian to organize a strike; and on a given day pickets were placed, and every man was turned out of the employers' sheds.

Notice was given that the employers should all and each give an advance of fifty per cent. on previous rates before the men would resume work. As there was a hundred and fifty thousand pounds' worth of wool at the moment wanting to be shipped, this ultimatum brought matters to a crisis. Some of the merchants consented to the advance, and asked that the men in their employment should return to their work. The Jew and Armenian delegates waited on these merchants, and explained that a concession on the part of a few of the employers was of no use, and could not be held to justify any of the men in resuming work; for if the more urgent needs of the employers were met, by the acceptance in certain cases of the advance of fifty per cent., the rest could wait until the great body of the men would be forced by poverty to give way, and go to work at any wages that might be offered.

One of the wool merchants gave me these details of this singular strike, and he said that the delegates argued the case, from their point of view, with great clearness and ability. They admitted readily enough that the rate of wages would be ultimately regulated by the law of supply and demand; they said they knew very well that when there was little wool to be shipped the merchants would not pay the enhanced wages; they

would only pay the old rate, and keep the wool in their stores until the men agreed to accept it. But they maintained that as matters then were the merchants could not afford to do that; a great deal of the wool should be shipped at once, and unless all was paid for at the proposed rate, none should be shipped, for the men would not put a hand to it. To give a reasonable and moral basis for a demand urged with such unyielding determination, they went into the question of the price of food, and the fall in the value of paper money, and showed that the men could scarcely exist on the old wages. But the grand argument, and that which proved ultimately successful, was that Mussulman, Jew, and Christian had pledged themselves to hold together in the struggle, and that unless the demand put forward was acceded to by each and every one of the merchants, neither Greek nor Turk, Armenian nor Jew, would put a hand to a bale of wool.

The management of this strike showed not only a complete mastery of the principles of organization derived from the prevalence amongst each community of the habit of regulating its own affairs, but a most unexpected facility in combining and sinking religious and social antipathies in view of a common object.

I had some conversations with the heads of the Jewish community in the capital. I found them to be enlightened men for the most part, of French education, and quite European in ideas and habits. They were by no means blind to the shortcomings of the Turkish administration, and they insisted as strongly as any one

upon the urgent need of sweeping reforms, but they were in no sense hostile to the empire; they wished it well, and were desirous of seeing the necessary ameliorations effected, in order to secure its stability.

A Jewish merchant with whom I had a long and interesting conversation in his counting-house at Galata, said that the Jews and the Turks suffered from opposite tendencies; the Jews, as a rule, went into trade when they were so young that they had not time to educate themselves; their only thought was to earn a livelihood; and when successful in that, to amass a fortune. The Turks, on the contrary, had no notion of commerce. In the towns they looked for the Government to support them by providing them with places in the offices of the administration, but if they failed to get employment of that kind, they starved. In the country they took to agriculture, and being strong and fairly industrious, they were successful enough in tilling the fields; but they had not enterprise to try new methods and better themselves or make fortunes.

I inquired whether the Israelites generally were making an advance in education similar to that which appeared to have set in at Baghdad.

"Upon that point," said my mercantile friend, "I would not like to speak too positively. Some progress has undoubtedly been made, and the Alliance Israelite Universelle at Paris is accomplishing a good deal in the way of improving our schools. But the misfortune is that in our community it is the custom to marry at a very early age; the children are numerous, and it is a matter

almost of necessity to put them to some trade at which they can earn something, long before their school instruction is complete. That is a great drawback; still things are not so bad as they were."

"Is there any sign of amelioration in other directions? Is the country, as a whole, actually receding or advancing?"

"That question is not one that can be easily answered. As compared to European countries, which have during a few years past made immense strides with their railways and their steamers, and in industrial development generally, Turkey might be held to have fallen back relatively. But actually she has made some progress in various directions. She moves, however, too slowly for the times; she must quicken her pace, or she will be shoved aside and out of the race. The administration is incredibly short-sighted in some things. Every lucifer match used in the country is imported from abroad; the trade is for the most part in Austrian hands. It struck some men of business here that a match manufactory would pay well, if it only secured half the money now going to Trieste for lucifers, and application was made for permission to establish one. The matter was referred to the Custom-House authorities, and they reported that if matches were made in the country, it would diminish the quantity imported, and therefore the revenue would suffer. Permission to set up the factory was therefore refused. The fact that the State would benefit by the money now sent out of the country being spent in wages amongst the workpeople, while the profits

would enable their employers to pay taxes, was not deemed worthy of a moment's consideration. How can the country prosper where such stupidity is to be found in every department of the Government? The ministers and heads of departments do not understand their business. There is one thing to be said in their favour, however. They do not interfere with our schools or our religious observances. They allow the most absolute toleration. In that respect this country is a hundred years in advance of Russia."

Thus the testimony of the missionaries to the complete religious liberty accorded by the Turkish Government was emphatically confirmed by Jewish lips, at the very moment of condemning the faults which characterize the administration in other respects.

The Greeks whom it was my good fortune to meet were generally well-informed men, and on the whole, it seemed to me, remarkably free from the prejudices of race which one might expect to mar their judgment when speaking of the Turk. They spoke of his faults and failings without bitterness, and manifested no pro-Russian leanings of any kind. I do not attribute this to mere diplomacy on their part, for they did not hesitate to express very freely their disapproval of the general support which England was giving to the Turkish Empire. They affected to regard the Empire as doomed, and spoke of Greece as the destined heir of Constantinople. Russia was evidently considered as an outsider, who wished to take the estate alike from its present possessor and its rightful owner, while England

very culpably wished to keep the Turks in possession as long as possible. "So long as England can prevent Turkey from toppling over," said a Greek banker to me, "she will do so, and neither the Greeks nor the other Christians will get anything. As for the Turks themselves, they can do nothing. They have no head for business; they cannot conduct their own affairs as other people can. How then can they govern the Christian populations properly? When you go to Athens you will see good streets and roads, just as in any other European city; it is the same at Bucharest. It is very different in the cities which the Turks still govern. They have done a little for Constantinople itself, though even there nearly everything has really been done by the Greeks and other Christians—but which of the other towns is fit to live in?"

There was no gainsaying the truth of this, but I ventured to point out that even in Western Europe the Hausmannization of great cities was of recent origin, and that both in Constantinople and Smyrna something has been done in the way of improvement.

"No doubt," said the Greek, "but the improvements are the work of others; the Turks have done wonders in not throwing obstacles in their way. It is not in the mind of a Turk to do these things. He does not see the use of troubling himself. *Il ne faut pas les en vouloir; ils sont comme ça, les Turcs.*"

The patronizing air with which the poor Turks were excused for their shortcomings, on the ground that they could not help being imbecile, was very characteristic

of the attitude assumed, by educated Greeks, with regard to their former oppressors.

Nothing was more remarkable than the stoicism with which Turks of all classes, official and non-official, soldiers and civilians, bore the galling spectacle of the triumphant Russians, in full uniform, clanking their sabres about the streets, and thronging every place of public resort. In the cafés chantants and in the public gardens at Pera, Russian officers and non-commissioned officers, and sometimes privates, were to be found drinking and smoking, singly, or in little groups of four or five; and red-fezzed officers close by never manifested the least impatience. Sometimes the Turkish officers got into conversation with them; but as a rule they avoided looking towards them, and affected to be profoundly unconscious of their presence. If Prussian officers had ventured thus freely into cafés on the Boulevards after the fall of Paris, it is certain that the French would not have displayed such admirable self-control. But as our Greek friend said, *les Turcs sont comme ça.*

Early in June it was rumoured that England was about to assume a protectorate over the Asiatic provinces of Turkey, and the excitement amongst the cosmopolitan population of Pera became very great. The precise nature of the arrangement contemplated was not then known, and the prevalent idea was that England would undertake the whole administration of Asiatic Turkey, while the other European Powers would take the European provinces in hand, leaving "Constantinople and a cabbage garden" with a mere titular sovereignty to the Sultan.

As we know, nothing so drastic was intended, but for a moment the consternation among the Turks was very great.

When by degrees the real nature of the Anglo-Turkish Convention became known, the general impression was that if it were thoroughly carried out, it would arrest the march of Russian aggression, and save the Ottoman Empire. The fact that Sir Austen Layard himself was of that opinion had weight with many who might otherwise have been sceptical, for his intimate acquaintance with the condition and requirements of the Asiatic provinces was known to everybody. The Turks were to a certain extent reconciled to what at best they evidently regarded as the lesser of two evils, by their confidence in the English Ambassador, whom they knew to have an honest liking for the Turks as a people, though he hardly concealed his opinion of the governing class.

We now know the exact shape which reform of the Turkish administration is to take. European inspectors will superintend the collection of revenue, the administration of justice, and the working of a proper system of police, and the gendarmerie is to be officered by Europeans. No provision is here made for the construction of roads and other public works essential to the development of the vast resources of the country. Still all the more glaring abuses which have retarded the progress of Asiatic Turkey will, no doubt, be eradicated if the moderate programme decided upon be honestly and energetically carried out. When the raiding of Kurd and Arab is rendered impossible by a well-trained

and a well-commanded gendarmerie, and the laws administered under the eyes of European assessors with characters to lose, capital will, no doubt, be largely invested and in a few years change the face of the country. In the foregoing pages we have seen what is being already accomplished at Bussorah, at Baghdad, and at Smyrna; how the desert is being reclaimed, and corn and dates produced in enormous quantities for export along the banks of the Shat-el-Arab, and the Tigris, and how commerce flourishes in the great seaport of Asia Minor. There is scarcely a sandjak throughout the whole vast extent of the Sultan's Asiatic dominions where enterprise, labour, and capital will not have equal scope and abundant remuneration.

If any permanent good is to be accomplished, and the magnificent territories at which we have glanced are to be restored to civilization and lasting prosperity, it is essential that the fabric of the Ottoman Empire should not be allowed to disappear in the necessary process of reorganization and reform. Its maintenance is indispensable if Russian despotism, more overwhelming than that of the Ottomans in the day of their power, and more enduring, is not to crush the life out of the various populations which have now a chance of free development under a rule which, mild and tolerant by habit, when reformed will become beneficent. With Russia established in the valley of the Euphrates, her aggressive influence would arrest the progress of civilization in the Persian Gulf, convert Persia into a vassal state, and trouble the repose of India.

The continued existence of the Ottoman Empire as a strong military power is indispensable; but some changes are from time to time suggested and advocated in influential quarters, which, if carried out, would obliterate Turkey from the list of States. It has even been proposed that all the Turkish provinces, except Arabia proper, should be made autonomous, and that only the shadow of sovereignty should be left to the Porte. The mere attempt to do this would, of course, effectually abolish the military power of Turkey. The mere name of Empire would be left. The autonomy of the Asiatic provinces is out of the question. How could Mesopotamia or Kurdistan become autonomous? The Arabs and the Kurds are too "autonomous" already, and the first thing to be done with them is to place them under a régime of well-armed police. Asia Minor is Turkish, and does not ask for autonomy. The elements of self-government do not exist in Armenia. The Armenian Christians are the minority of the population, and are deficient in the military virtues; they could not hold their own against the warlike Kurds. Syria could not govern itself: it could not even defend itself from the Bedouins if the present Turkish administration, inefficient as it is, were withdrawn.

The supersession of the Turkish Government will infallibly result in the annexation of its Asiatic provinces by its most formidable neighbour. Of all the Sultan's subjects the Turks alone have even a wish to govern, or any notion of maintaining order by military force or otherwise. The other Mohammedan races desire simply

to have the opportunity of doing what they please in the way of pillaging and devastating, while the Christians are too depressed and unambitious to have any desires at all beyond that of being protected by the nearest Consul—whether English, or French, or Russian, is all the same to them.

To destroy the Turkish organization is to give up the whole of Asiatic Turkey to anarchy or to foreign occupation. That organization requires to be improved, or, to speak more correctly, it requires to be more energetically and honestly worked, for the existing institutions and laws are in themselves good. If the men who have to administer them were up to the mark, all would be well. But they have never been trained to the work: they are underpaid at the best of times, and often they are not paid at all. They hold their appointments for uncertain periods, and have little or no prospect of advancement for good conduct if they have not the wherewithal to purchase promotion. Can it be wondered at that corruption and inefficiency are characteristic of the administration of so many pashas? The wonder is that there are any—and there are several—who are above reproach. What was the condition of the Civil Service in India before Lord Cornwallis raised the pay and the status of the civilian class? Such as it was then the Turkish administration is now. A similar reform could be as easily effected by similar means. If the Turkish officials were adequately and regularly paid, and promotion were to go by seniority instead of by bribery, all would be changed, or, at all events, it would be

reasonable to expect that the corrupt practices now so prevalent could be easily stamped out. If Abdul Aziz —who was a very good monarch before his mind gave way in the later years of his reign—had organized and trained a civil service when he organized and trained the splendid army which nearly saved the Empire in the recent war, it is just possible that Russia would never have been tempted to foment the troubles which gave her the pretext for intervention.

But Turkey, as I have said, has no real civil service. It is of the first necessity that men should be trained up to administer the affairs of the country: there is now no time to lose in this matter. Here it is that England can really serve Turkey. Under her supervision, the best of the Turkish officials can be trained, and taught to govern in accordance with sound principles. Meanwhile British officials will supervise the administration of the provinces, and aid in the reorganization of the services and the development of the resources of the Empire. It is, of course, essential that the supervision of the European officials shall be real and effective. The advice they tender must be acted upon if it is to be of any service. Many pashas known to be incorrigible will, no doubt, be permanently shelved, but there are many men of ability and known honesty who will be able to give valuable aid in the great work of regenerating the civil administration of the Empire. With settled order and good government, the development of the immense resources of the country will soon bring ease to the now bankrupt treasury.

I left Constantinople for Athens on the 12th June. Here, then, this record of my journey from Bombay to the Bosphorus comes to a close. Between March and June I travelled over 1500 miles in the Sultan's territories, and accomplished nearly two-thirds of the distance on horseback, not because I preferred that form of locomotion, but because no other was available. I do not think the time or the labour at all thrown away. A great future awaits those magnificent provinces which have so long lain fallow after centuries of boundless prosperity. Already the evidences of a slow revival are visible. It does not, I think, require the gift of prophecy to foretell that in a few years the whole face of the country will be changed, and that the traveller who makes his way from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean will not see it, as I have seen it, with the desert visible from the minarets of the most populous cities, and wild Arabs and wilder Kurds making every league of the road picturesque but unsafe.

THE END.

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